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Cover picture.

Luigi Robecchi-Brichetti with Mabruk, an African child. This photograph (circa 1890) of the explorer with his servant, both dressed as gentlemen, posed with their bicycles in a provincial Italian town, is taken from *Africa Then: Photographs 1840-1918*, edited by Nicolas Monti (174pp. Thames and Hudson, £20.00) 0300 541302.

Striking a new balance

Robert Skidelsky

WILL HUTTON

The Revolution that Never Was: An assessment of Keynesian economics

229pp. Longman. Paperback, £5.95.

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Keynes's "General Theory": Fifty years on

159pp. Institute of Economic Affairs.

Paperback, £5.50.

0255 36197 1

RICHARD LAYARD

How to Beat Unemployment

201pp. Oxford University Press. £15

(paperback, £3.95).

019877265 3

Keynes denied that market economies, left to themselves, tend automatically to full employment, and called on the State to ensure that they did. His critics assert that economies do tend automatically to full employment, and that State intervention only makes matters worse than they would have been. Keynesians tend to combine scepticism towards markets with faith in the wisdom and benevolence of governments; anti-Keynesians to think of markets as benevolent, governments corrupt.

Both sides have had their self-confidence dented by events. The great surge of inflation in the 1970s gave the anti-Keynesians a boost because it seemed to be the direct result of Keynesian policy. The more recent persistence of mass unemployment under anti-Keynesian governments hardly suggests that economies reach full employment unaided. There are signs that a new balance is starting to be struck, both in economic analysis and in discussions of economic policy.

The three books under review give some indication of the current state of play. Before considering them, though, it may be helpful to give a brief account of the main issues involved. The pre-Keynesian economists believed that an economy which uses money behaves just like a barter economy, in which producers are paid in kind – eg, are paid for their labour in bread, which they either consume or exchange for some other item of consumption. In such an economy everything produced is consumed. This is true even when part of output is stored (saved) for consumption at a later date. Such an economy cannot suffer from "deficient demand" – a situation in which output has to be cut back, and labourers laid off, because there is not enough consuming or buying "power".

Keynes denied that a money economy behaved like a barter economy. As soon as people receive money instead of goods for their work a wedge is driven between production and consumption, selling and buying. People have a choice to buy goods or to keep (hoard) money. If they decide to keep back part of what they have earned – out of mistrust, say, of the future – a problem arises in disposing of output at prices sufficient to cover the costs of producing it. The pre-Keynesians denied that

lower level of activity, would be the fall in quantities of goods produced. The whole debate, then, has to do with the role of the price system in adjusting the economy to shocks. If prices do not, or cannot, do the job, then output and employment do the adjusting for them, and the case for offsetting government action to expand demand is strong. If the price system can do the job, even if slowly, the case for government intervention is weaker.

Will Hutton writes enthusiastically, if some-



"Anfield", from Joseph McKenzie's *Pages of Experience*: Photography 1947-1987 (90pp. Edinburgh: Polygon, £12.95, 0 948275 43 X), is one of the studies included in his photographic essay "Hawthill – Death of a Living Community", 1974 – a characteristic McKenzie examination of a Scots' inner city area in decline.

this made any real difference. If people withdrew money from the stream of purchasing power this would cause prices to fall in proportion, enabling the same output to be sold at lower prices. At worst there might be a temporary problem while the economy adjusted from a higher to a lower price level.

Keynes argued that the problem was more than temporary. The classical economists, for example, said that when investment demand fell off, the price of borrowing savings – the interest rate – would fall to a point where saving and investment were back in balance, with output unchanged. Keynes argued, on the other hand, that the rate of interest might well fall, but if savers' desire to hoard (what he called "liquidity preference") was increasing at the same time as business men's demand for savings was declining (which he thought would normally be the case) the rate of interest would still be too high to employ all the savings people wanted to make. The initial shortage of demand would not reverse itself but would worsen as the economy spiralled downwards. This amounted to a denial on Keynes's part that a money economy possessed any automatic self-correcting mechanism. In such a case, what would eventually balance it, at a new,

what messily, from a Keynesian perspective in *The Revolution that Never Was: An assessment of Keynesian economics*. A flavour of his exposition is conveyed by the following passage: The Keynesian interpretation of markets emphasises... the manner in which uncertainty, changing expectations, time, and money all combine to put the load of adjustment in markets on quantity rather than price. In the labour market this manifests itself as involuntary unemployment; in the financial markets as the hoarding of money; and in the product markets as the cutting of production. For the system as a whole, adjustment to a change in expectations and the consequent revision in quantities will be shouldered by output, income and employment rather than by relative prices moving to bring the system back into equilibrium after an initial shock. This is the Keynesian "vision"....

But Hutton believes that this "vision" was "bastardized" – taken over by the anti-Keynesians and incorporated into the pre-Keynesian scheme of thought. The crime was to replace a logical argument with an empirical one. The "bastard" Keynesians admit that, following a big shock, some key prices remain "sticky" (eg, "rigid wages"), chiefly for institutional reasons (eg, strong trade unions). This "stickiness" is enough to explain the growth of unemployment and justify remedial action to expand

demand; but the logic of the classical system is left unimpaired. If prices were free to adjust, the system would always tend towards full employment. This, says Hutton, is precisely what Keynes denied, believing it was logically impossible for the price system to adjust demand to supply in a failing market. Prices may adjust all right; but when market conditions are changing drastically agents do not trust the price signals they receive, and they do not act on them; therefore excess supplies are not eliminated; and the economy runs down further instead of recovering.

Hutton believes that the bastardization of Keynes has had two baleful consequences. First, by calling certain prices sticky the bastard Keynesians have in effect conceded the main anti-Keynesian contention: that there is some price-adjustment mechanism at work which will bring the economy back to balance at full employment, even though it might take longer than the classical economists believed. It is as though Keynes's theoretical revolution never was. Moreover, the assurance that the system is self-correcting may easily weaken the incentive to government action to expand demand, especially if this is seen to have costs (like inflation) which need to be balanced against the benefit of reducing the duration of unemployment. Second, bastard Keynesianism leads to a mechanical kind of fiscalism which while stoking up inflation diverts attention from the need "for the State to [mount] an assault on the portfolio preferences of the financial institutions". The need is not to run budget deficits to compensate for liquidity preference but to find some way of making investments less liquid. This follows Keynes's own hint (in Chapter Twelve of his *General Theory*) that "the only radical cure for the crises of confidence which afflict the economic life of the modern world would be to allow the individual no choice between consuming his income and ordering the production of [a] specific capital asset". Only in this case would the conditions of a barter economy be satisfied in a money economy. These lines of thought lead Hutton to an interesting concluding chapter on the deficiencies of the British State as an instrument of Keynesian policy. Britain, he argues, lacks a State tradition capable of expressing the "public interest" and "which market agents judge to be friendly".

Hutton's book is really about a debate, initiated by Axel Leijonhufvud, internal to the Keynesian tradition itself: a debate about whether Keynes was questioning the logic or

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merely the empirical assumptions of classical theory. Keynes's own beliefs are not the key issue here. He may have thought he was challenging the logical basis of the older theory, but only have succeeded in undermining its empirical assumptions. The main issue is whether there exists the possibility of a dialogue or synthesis between the Keynesian and anti-Keynesian traditions, which could lead to a consensus on policy. Keynesians like Hutton who imply that a theory of value (for relative prices) is logically impossible put themselves beyond the possibility of such a dialogue. However, if it is a matter of sticky prices, a basis for dialogue exists. It then becomes a question of how best to theorize about such prices, their consequences for the economy, and their implications for policy.

These matters are taken up in Keynes's *"General Theory": Fifty years on*. One expects any compilation from the Institute of Economic Affairs to convict the Master of root-and-branch error. It is a sign of the times that, with John Burton's thoughtful introduction setting the tone, Keynes is treated throughout with wary respect, which in the improbable case of Milton Friedman rises almost to adulation. Criticism of Keynes focuses on two main points: that the *General Theory* "crowded out" an intellectually sounder approach to theorizing about economic disturbances; and that Keynes failed to balance properly the costs of market failure against the costs of government failure.

The promising research programme which Keynes supposedly crowded out is called by Professor Yeager the "monetary disequilibrium" approach. This affirmed, first of all, that economies were self-correcting. Mass unemployment, that is to say, is a disequilibrium condition, not an equilibrium one. It generated forces tending to restore full employment. Second, it was held that this disequilibrium condition usually results from a disturbance in the money supply. Provided that the monetary authority can keep money "neutral", a money economy will behave like a barter economy. As Yeager puts it:

Clark Warburton... argued... a tendency towards equilibrium rather than disequilibrium is inherent in the logic of a market economy. Whenever, therefore, markets are quite generally and conspicuously failing to clear, some essentially exogenous [external] disturbance must have occurred... In a depression what bars people from accomplishing all the exchanges of each other's goods and services that they desire is a deficient real quantity of money. Such a deficiency could arise either from a shrinkage of the money supply or from its failure to keep pace with the demand for money associated with real economic growth. Even then, the real money supply would remain adequate if people marked down their prices and wages sufficiently and promptly. Price and wage "stickiness" is, however, sensible from the standpoint of individual decision-makers, in the face of monetary disturbances, even though that stickiness has painful macro-economic consequences.

No one reading the IEA book would gather that Keynes himself came out of the monetary disequilibrium stable - his *Treatise on Money* was his grand essay in this tradition - and only broke with it when he concluded it could not yield fruitful policy prescriptions. The problem was that it was impossible to specify a policy for keeping money neutral - eliminating, that is, all those functions of money which disturb the equilibrium. All policies for keeping money neutral have reference to "equilibrium conditions" which are not present in actual economic data. Wicksteed, for example, argued that monetary policy should be geared to keeping the actual rate of interest equal to its "natural" rate - the rate which equalized saving and investment. But he offered no guidance as to what the natural (or equilibrium) rate was. The monetary authority, in other words, was being asked to hit not so much a moving target as an invisible one. Keynes eventually broke out of this bind by postulating the possibility of any number of equilibria (points of rest) at any level of activity - and leaving it to the government to choose which particular level it wanted to achieve and sustain. The main defect of this drastic solution was that it left out dynamics: Keynes's economy was always in a state of repose, with the action, so to speak, taking place off-stage. But it had the advantage of abandoning the search for the elusive criterion of "neutral" money; and it spoke much more directly to the situation of persisting mass unemployment and to the needs of policy-

makers. Keynes was a better political economist than were the disequilibrium theorists.

The second major criticism of Keynes - that he failed to recognize the possibility of government failure - is more to the point. Friedman attributes this to Keynes's being an Englishman rather than an American. He and his English fellow-economists took for granted a system of oligarchic government served by an incorruptible civil service. Had his experience been with "the inefficient and incompetent state and federal civil service in the USA and with the US citizenry, who are anything but automatically law-abiding", he might have been less willing to entrust government with vast additional discretionary powers on a permanent basis. It is no accident that "public choice" theory, developed by the Nobel Laureate James Buchanan, which alleges an inherent bias towards perpetual deficit finance on the part of ambitious bureaucrats and vote-catching politicians, should have originated in the United States. The remedy, according to this school of thought, is to entrench some régime-like the balanced budget system of old - which would prevent governments indulging their inflationary proclivities.

Keynes did assume a greater degree of disinterestedness in the conduct of affairs than it was realistic of him to expect, especially after his own experiences with Lloyd George. However, it is wrong to think that the Keynesian system which emerged after his death was the one he expected. For one thing he believed that it would be discretionary monetary, rather than discretionary fiscal, policy which would be used to keep economies at their target level of activity - and that such policy would be independent of political control. For another, he never believed that the government's advisers would (in England) continuously aim to hit a target of unemployment as low as 1 or 2 per cent - a point to which we shall return. He would have become very quickly aware of the dangers of building inflationary expectations into the system. The fact remains, however, that his theory did legitimize a scrapping of old defences against the hubris and the corruption of power. Great man that he was, Keynes was also a man of his time. Getting rid of unemployment seemed more urgent than worrying about inflation: he failed to see that "neutral" politics was as much a pipe dream as "neutral" money.

These two lines of attack on Keynes do not exclude fruitful discussion between Keynesians and anti-Keynesians. It is possible to argue about how strongly, and how quickly, an economy is self-correcting; about how much, and what kind of, managing a government should try to do. This is one reason for the great interest that attaches to Richard Layard's *How to Beat Unemployment*. What Layard tries to do is to argue a case for Keynesian demand-expansion to lower unemployment within a "new classical" (or anti-Keynesian) analytic framework. I don't think it quite comes off, but it is an indication of the changing climate that the attempt is being made. The book is written in the rather irritating baby-talk that economists often use in an effort to make their ideas clear to non-economists. In fact, the ideas are difficult, and too much of the argument is left out. The art is not to leave out the difficult bits, but to present them attractively, and make them intelligible to the non-technical reader.

The best way to start on Layard is to ask the question: what do we mean by full employment? Keynes himself never believed that deficient demand accounted for the whole of any given amount of unemployment. He divided unemployment into "voluntary" and "involuntary" varieties. The distinction was between those who prized themselves out of jobs in "normal" times by asking for a wage which exceeded their value to the employer, and those who could not price themselves back into jobs, however hard they tried (and perhaps they didn't always try that hard) because, with the economy turning down, their asking price, however much they lowered it, would still be higher than what it was worth the employer to pay them. Obviously Keynes thought that the ratio of involuntary to voluntary unemployment rose during a depression. The important point, though, is that for him full employment was compatible with the existence of voluntary unemployment. The other point was that there

was no a priori method of distinguishing between the two kinds of unemployment. Keynes reckoned, on the basis of historical experience, that normal (or voluntary) unemployment in Britain was about 5 per cent of the labour force. The purpose of his distinction was to set limits to what a government could hope to do by way of demand-expansion, without running into problems of inflation or over-heating. If even 5 per cent was politically unacceptable, then the government would need to act on what is now called the supply-side of the economy - make it more painful for workers to choose not to work.

Milton Friedman gave a much sharper analytical edge to the distinction between the two types of unemployment when, in 1967, he invented the idea of the "natural rate of unemployment". This he defined as the unemployment rate consistent with zero, or stable, inflation. (This "natural rate" is now called the NAIRU or Non-Accelerating Inflation Rate of Unemployment, a much more horrid term.) Friedman meant by the natural rate roughly what unemployment would be if the economy were behaving "normally". Like Wicksteed's natural rate of interest, it was an equilibrium condition. Friedman's purposes, however, were rather different from Keynes's. First, Friedman, like the monetary disequilibrium theorists already mentioned, thought that economies always tend to their natural rate of unemployment. Second, Friedman's natural rate, unlike Keynes's normal rate, had no historical reference. You simply knew that actual unemployment was at its natural rate when inflation was stable, but you could not say in advance what the natural rate was. All you could state with certainty was that when inflation was rising, unemployment must be below its natural rate; when it was falling, above it. Friedman's purpose in forging this tool of thought now becomes clear. Accelerating inflation, he claimed, was the result of continuous Keynesian attempts to hit a target level of unemployment below the natural rate by means of monetary expansion. He had apparently dealt a deadly blow to the Keynesian practice of his day and ushered in monetarism. The government's main task was to stop inflating the money supply. Once this was done, unemployment would settle down to its natural rate and that was the end of the story - at least of the part that demand played in it.

This kind of analysis hardly looks like a promising starting-point for an argument urging the government to reflate the economy: yet this is essentially how Layard uses it. He argues that the Thatcher contractionary "over-kill" of 1981-2, which halved the inherited inflation rate, pushed actual unemployment above its NAIRU, where it has stuck. (The book was written before the recent fall in unemployment.) This is the basis of his proposal to expand demand by targeting an extra £3 billion on 750,000 long-term unemployed, who would be guaranteed one-year jobs in the construction industries, social services and the private sector. He puts forward the interesting argument that "a once-for-all cut in [long-term] unemployment would tend to reduce the NAIRU, by increasing the number of insiders" - that is, by bringing extra workers into the labour market as job competitors. Layard justifies the limited scope of his reflationary package with the assertion that the British NAIRU is about 10 per cent, but the basis for this assertion is not given. In any case, economic recovery, stimulated by special government schemes, has already pushed back unemployment towards 10 per cent, so this part of his plan has been overtaken by events.

This brings us to the second part of the Layard plan: the reduction of what he calls the long-term NAIRU. This, in his view, requires a permanent incomes policy. Very briefly, the argument is as follows. Layard's NAIRU, unlike Friedman's, is not just the unemployment rate consistent with stable inflation, but the rate which keeps inflation stable. This reflects the more usual British view that inflation is a "cost push" phenomenon: we get inflation, Layard argues, not because the government keeps pumping money into the economy to reduce unemployment, but because trade union demand for "higher" real wages higher than the "feasible" real wage

employers can afford. The NAIRU is the amount of unemployment needed to equalize the target and feasible real wage. Obviously, the greater the pressure of cost push by trade unions, the higher the NAIRU - or the cost in unemployment of keeping prices stable - will need to be.

The purpose of Layard's incomes policy is to reduce real wage pressure, at a given level of unemployment, and thus reduce the unemployment cost of maintaining stable prices. The government would impose a tax on employers to the full amount of any pay rise they concede above a government-determined norm for the growth of hourly earnings. The assumption is that the norm would be lower than current wage increases. The government would then have a policy choice. Either it could reflate the economy, in Keynesian fashion, so as to maintain stable prices at a lower level of unemployment, or it could allow inflation to fall at the existing level of unemployment. "Either outcome", Layard writes, "would be a lot better than what we now have." He prefers the first.

The scheme is ingenious; in fact, it represents the most interesting alternative to Thatcherism which has emerged in recent years. It suffers, however, from a fatal flaw, namely its reliance on permanent incomes policy. There is no need to rehearse all the old arguments against incomes policy; merely to say that the premiss that it can permanently contain wage inflation has not stood the test of experience. Admittedly, tax-incentive policies of the Layard kind avoid some of the problems of the bureaucratic controls of the past. But they also appear to assume a degree of employer control over the wage bargain which, if true, would make them unnecessary. We must also insist on a point which Layard fudges. The purpose of his incomes policy is to reduce the average real wage. On Layard's analysis, the reduction in real wages is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for reducing unemployment. In a more recent article, written with Stephen Nichol (*Guardian*, February 4, 1987), Layard argues that "living standards need not fall" because a higher level of activity would raise national income, increase government revenues and thus permit tax reductions "in a way that completely offset the fall in wages (relative to prices) required to permit the expansion in employment". One can just hear the cynical union leader: "Tell me another!" The fact is that trade union leaders are simply not interested in maximizing the employment of their members at the expense of real wages. They at least have some control over the wage bargain: they have none over tax policies. And I do not see them willingly surrendering what they control in return for promises which they know all too well are likely to be broken whenever it suits the government to do so.

So I would want to marry the Keynesian and anti-Keynesian positions in a somewhat different way. We cannot dispense with Keynes, because market economies are inherently unstable and weakly self-correcting. It is not true that a flexible economy will naturally recover and maintain a full-employment level of activity, as Mrs Thatcher and her ministers seem to believe. At the same time, if we want the economy to deliver larger supplies at unchanged or lowered costs, we have to ensure this not by trying to get monopolies (business or union) to behave better, but by breaking them up - by moving the economy closer, that is, towards the competitive ideal. Technology, perhaps, is doing some of this already. But the most effective anti-monopoly policy is international and internal free trade. Too often the present government has privatized without deregulating. Competition is the key to more flexible prices in both product and labour markets. I would lock Layard's counter-inflation tax in a cupboard for emergency use only, and concentrate on some of his longer-term supply-side policies - such as improving labour mobility by restoring a market in rented housing and restricting access to, and the duration of, unemployment benefit. It is under cover of these that some further reflation could successfully be attempted. Finally, I would avoid treating the NAIRU concept with such reverence. It can be a useful tool of thought, but never an exact criterion of policy.

Backstage at a pantomime

Roy Jenkins

RODNEY TYLER
Campaign: The selling of the Prime Minister
21pp. Grafton. £10.95 (paperback, £6.95).
#346 13257 4

The exclamation mark in the title is presumably intended to indicate that this is breathless history: written fast, printed quick and on the bookshelves within five weeks of the event. The style is appropriately urgent. Yet the result is curiously satisfactory. The book is both readable and informative, with the quality of the electoral narrative little if at all inferior to that in Theodore White's famous *Making of the President* series.

Rodney Tyler is, however, attempting to do something different from the late Mr White. While White was trying to be objective in scope as well as in judgment, and to tell the story of each presidential contest from both sides of the battlefield, Tyler sets out to write only from one side of the hill, and even on that side he confines his attention to the commander-in-chief and her immediate staff. Outlying divisional commanders are treated as wholly peripheral. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, for example, is only as the recipient of an instruction to get his lunch.

The enemy camps are treated with an attempt at professional respect. There is no question of visiting them to report on morale and organization, but nor is there any question of denouncing them with moral indignation or denying their tactical successes. Tyler indeed has a vested interest in making them appear stronger at certain stages of the campaign than they in fact were. Otherwise dramatic tension could not have been maintained.

Yet the result of the 1987 election, he finally gives the impression, could not easily have been otherwise. He writes somewhat from the standpoint of a fair-minded observer of a British-African campaign a hundred years ago. The *Zulus* at times fought splendidly. The panache



From *Constant Exposure* by Paul Trevor (151pp with 68 black-and-white illustrations. Proper Pictures, 7 Philip House, Heneage St, London E1. Paperback, £9.95. 1 870 481 00 3).

of their attacks made Sir Garnet quite jumpy, but his nerve held and the poor devils could not really have been expected to hold against the massive superiority of advertising firepower (although there was some difficulty in getting the Saatchi guns pointing in the right direction) and the even greater superiority of white blood and the values learnt on the playing-fields of the London Business School.

It would be quite wrong to see Tyler as an objectionably partisan writer. First, he gives us almost excessive warning. "I am eternally grateful to the Prime Minister for agreeing to the interview which forms the bulk of the last chapter", he writes. "It is no secret that I am a great admirer of hers and it is in that context that any criticisms I have are made." Then he proceeds to tell his story in a way that is never offensive and only occasionally cloying. So persuasive is he that I found myself getting

emotionally involved on Mrs Thatcher's side, desperately wanting her to win at any rate her internal battle with those who were trying to keep the guns pointing in the wrong direction.

It must be understood that by this stage the narrative has assumed many of the characteristics of an all-purpose pantomime/fairy-story, sufficiently compendious to allow all characters to be amalgamated and all metaphors mixed. Mrs Thatcher herself was clearly both Cinderella and Puss-in-Boots. But an almost equally important character was the young nobleman, Lord "David and the Beinstalk" Young. He was assisted by another romantic character hitherto unknown to me called "Laughing Tim" Bell, who had, however, allowed the Saatchi operation to slip out of his control. (This led to the unfortunate problem of the line-of-sight of the guns.)

There was a looming quasi-villain in the

shape of Norman "The Assassin" (as he is apparently known to his political intimates) Tebbit. He seemed to be mixed up in the misdirection of the guns business, and might have had to be slain in order to free the princess. However, it turned out that he was not a villain at all, just in the wrong job. The fact that the princess herself had put him there is rather skewed over, but I suppose that no one can be right all the time. She had come to think that he could not run a wheel-stall (and Conservative Central Office was an emporium on a bigger scale than this) but she had almost total faith in his potentiality as a philosopher king. As, however, the nearest he was invited to get to philosophy was to do some straggling down Chingford way, this did not greatly help.

Without Lord David I do not know what would have happened. He got hold of a new fire-plan drawn up by Laughing Tim, out-maneuvred the philosopher king, who was probably being questioned by the Chingford police, and confronted those who were perverting the Saatchi spirit by asking them the ultimate question of what they thought their shares were worth on Friday morning if the princess were not freed. Having won this testing intellectual interchange he was then able to move into the almost unbearably moving aria, "We are here for one person - for her". On the crowning line of "If these ads are what she wants, then these ads are what she gets", the curtain was able to come down on the penultimate act and the drama was almost over.

Mrs Thatcher went on to perform the feat, unprecedented at least since the first Reform Bill, of winning three consecutive general elections. Mr Tyler pays inadequate regard to the effect of a split opposition under the British electoral system on these victories. Had 43 per cent of the vote then guaranteed victory, Churchill would have had no difficulty in surviving in 1945. Her feat is none the less remarkable, and this is as good a non-analytical, worm's-eye view of how it was achieved as one has any reason to expect.

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Clubland and beyond

Roy Foster

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Democracy and Religion: Gladstone and the Liberal Party 1867-1875
504pp. Cambridge University Press. £37.50.
0521 309484

EDWARD HAMILTON
The Destruction of Lord Rosebery: From the diary of Sir Edward Hamilton, 1894-1895
Edited by David Brooks
290pp. The Historians' Press, 9 Daisy Road, South Woodford, London E18. £25.
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Volume One: 1835-1885, 328 pp.
Volume Two: 1885-1910, 387 pp.
Edited by Peter Gordon
Northamptonshire Record Society. £15 and £18 (£30 the set).
090127545X

ROBERT BLAKE AND HUGH CECIL (Editors)
Salisbury: The man and his policies
298pp. Macmillan. £29.50.
0331 36762

"There are no doubt many plausible arguments in favour of the course which you adopted", wrote the governor-general of Canada, Lord Lansdowne, to Lord Spencer, outgoing Viceroy of Ireland, when the Liberal government abandoned office in 1885; "but I am afraid that the 'historian' whose verdict we always look forward to will say that you allowed yourselves to be driven out by the Tories because you knew that disruption from within was inevitable." The historians have indeed said that, and a great deal else. But what this typically thought-provoking nugget from Peter Gordon's indispensable edition of Spencer's papers principally brings home is the realization that late-Victorian politicians themselves anticipated the academic industry that has grown up around decoding their intentions.

The profuse and proliferating evidence, the numerous observers, the high-profile public rhetoric - all this allows a multiplicity of interpretations. Moreover, the cast is strictly limited. With such a small company there is an irresistible desire to switch them round into different parts and hand out a new libretto. More than a decade ago, Alistair Cooke and John Vincent did just this in *The Governing Passion: Cabinet Government and party politics in England 1885-6*. Here we found a Gladstone "marked for the axe" long before 1885, a crafty and trimming Hartington, a Randolph Churchill of impressive gravitas and insight, while reliability and wisdom were straightforwardly attributed to the muckraking gossip, Henry Labouchere.

The dust has since settled, and high-political scepticism has found its way into the textbooks (occasionally entirely dominating them, as in Michael Bentley's iconoclastic *Politics Without Democracy*, reviewed in the TLS of November 9, 1984). But the interpretations still come -

cynical, hermeneutic or determined. The reliability of Labouchere is as hard to establish as ever.

On a higher plane, the question remains: in the last age before the professional politicians took over, what were the chief motivations of the actors within the charmed circle - conscious and unconscious? Everyone in the political clubland anatomized by the books under review continually reiterated a mannered weariness with office - Rosebery, Harcourt, Morley, Salisbury, most of all Gladstone. But when one gets past the defence-works of harmless self-deception, necessary cant and Trollopian dutifulness, what lies behind?

Cooke and Vincent concentrated on the broking of parallel ambitions among a highly talented élite, in a professional world which should be seen as an enclosed community, analogous to the City or an Oxbridge college, rather than a forum polarized by ideological distinctions. (Too easily defined as neo-Peterhouse nihilism, this view is quite as assimilable to old-fashioned Marxism.) But such a view neither contradicts other interpretations nor exhausts the possibility of new ones, which will occur as long as research students receive grants. The third Marquis of Salisbury would not have liked this. According to his daughter Gwendolen, in a marvellous essay now published for the first time by Lord Blake and Hugh Cecil,

He disliked the type of history which is becoming increasingly common and popular: that in which the facts are gathered round some central idea or ideas of the author, and wherein their effect in supporting or in throwing doubt upon his theories is the aspect in which they are almost exclusively considered. "I want to know what happened, not what the man thinks", would be his irritable comment.

Salisbury would not have appreciated J. P. Parry's dense, heavyweight and deeply absorbing study of Gladstonian Liberalism. In a sense, *Democracy and Religion: Gladstone and the Liberal Party 1867-1875* uses the structure of Cooke and Vincent's *Governing Passion* to point a different moral. The first half of the book is an analysis - intellectual, interpretative, full of insight - of men and ideas. The second half treats political issues and actions in the light of the earlier emphases and conclusions. The overall effect is to reinterpret the preoccupations (and eventual failure) of Gladstonian Liberalism, restoring the importance of religious priorities and abstract moral purposes.

This is neither as crude nor as reactionary as it may sound. Parry's range of reading and breadth of reference are awe-inspiring. His work, like that of David Bebbington in *The Nonconformist Conscience* and David Hempston in *Methodism and Politics*, not only relates religious predisposition to political practice, but attempts to reconstitute the elements of a political culture. It makes possible several new perceptions, notably regarding the way that Irish issues (Disestablishment, education, eventually Home Rule) were translated into English terms. It is useful to see Gladstone's Irish university plans scuppered as much by English reactions as by Irish condemnation.

Parry is particularly good on demonstrating the compatibility of High-churchmanship and Liberalism (though when it came to the pinch, Gladstone's late defence of Church of England Establishment turned out to be weak, untheoretical, and contingent upon immediate political considerations). His treatment of the Whig-Liberal pedigree is full of insight. There is a valuable restoration of Carlyle to the place he must occupy in any profile of the intellectual history of mid-Victorian Britain.

However, there is not always a convincing overlap between the spheres of intellectual and political activity. According to Parry, the Victorian "statesman's task" may be defined in terms of condemning "working-class propensity to strike, breed, and drink excessively; middle-class cultural narrowness and obsession with profit; upper-class decadence and political apathy". But none of the footnote authorities cited for this conclusion (Arnold, Greg, Kingsley, Hughes, Trollope, *et al*) was a politician; and the thread spun between ideas and action does not always stretch the distance.

In many ways, Parry is better on particularities than generalizations, whose dangers he specifically realizes. There is a first-rate section on "Perceptions of Gladstone" ("Tory as he was - First Churchman as he is, and revolutionist as he will be", according to Bouverie in 1866). But when the conclusion dramatically presents the Home Rule crisis of 1886 as the direct result of tension evident in the 1867-74 period, one shares Salisbury's disquiet about historical pattern-making. Between the decline of Gladstonian Liberalism into disunity in 1874-5, and the arrival of Home Rule on the political agenda at the end of 1885, a decade intervened - about which Parry's study is necessarily silent. But during these ten years too much happened in Westminster, in the constituencies, and across the Irish Sea, for the effects of day-to-day contingency to be so airily abandoned. Leaving aside high-political rivalries, the Liberal split over Home Rule for Ireland in 1886 certainly relates to tensions within the party's ideology twenty years previously - several of them to do with religion. But it has at least as much to do with the immediate and unforeseen effects of Parnellism, Davittism, Irish-American rampant, agricultural crisis, and franchise extension. This does not negate Parry's basic thesis, but it makes it necessarily limited. He has none the less written a study of impressive intelligence, forcefulness and originality.

Unlike, for instance, J. C. D. Clark's attempt to reassert non-secular priorities in the world of political action, Parry's study embodies an extremely wide range of reference; and this includes several politicians' diaries. The usefulness of these varies. But there is general agreement that "Eddy" Hamilton's wordy Boswellizing of Gladstone and others in the 1880s and 1890s constitutes an important source; his diaries for the early 1880s have already been edited by Dudley Bahlman, and have been widely used.

What historians have in general been less ready to say is that Hamilton emerges as an obtuse toady, afflicted with an Old Etonian

obsession which makes the Lyttelton-Harcourt-Davis letters look almost sane. Certainly, the selection from his 1894-5 diary now presented by David Brooks in *The Destruction of Lord Rosebery* is full of giveaways about his priorities. If Rosebery's horse wins the Derby, "I don't much care what happens. Rosebery will have achieved the greatest feat (in its way) of any Prime Minister; and perhaps then the sooner he is out of the present impossible and uncomfortable state of things the better...". Hamilton is happiest anxiously reckoning the balance of Etonians *vis-à-vis* Harrovians around the Cabinet table, or eagerly advising his adored chief on matters like Stephen Gladstone's claims to the Deanery of Winchester ("He has got quite average ability - indeed his father thinks it far above the average - and he is a very strong liberal..."). The principal drawback to his being given preference of that kind is his appearance, which is certainly not prepossessing. On the other hand, as Brooks points out, where Hamilton makes an important error of calculation in preparing the 1894 Budget, the incident does not find its way into his complacent daily record.

But this does not detract from the interest of the diary, and it is useful to have an accessible sequel to the years covered by Bahlman. Moreover, Brooks's introductory treatment of the Rosebery government (five chapters, making up nearly half of the volume) provides the real meat of the book. The Harcourt-Rosebery rivalry for succession to the Liberal premiership after Gladstone, the baroque Rosebery neurosis, the significance of taxation policy in 1894 (and the underrated influence of Lewis Harcourt) receive deft and perceptive analysis. Military and public expenditure, two rocks on which Liberalism foundered in 1895, are shown to hold out ominous portents for the future. Brooks stops his analysis too short; one wishes for more retrospect to the early 1890s, and his treatment tends to be austere behaviourist. But his thoughtful commentary places Hamilton's naive observations in a setting which enhances them possibly more than their due.

An important figure in the Harcourt-Rosebery saga, and in Hamilton's world generally, was the fifth Earl Spencer. Gladstone characteristically told him that he would have recommended him as his successor in 1894, had the Queen asked him directly, but that he could not mention him when an oblique approach was made through her secretary. Such a scenario could have been invented by Trollope, and so could Spencer. Hamilton rated him as the most efficient Admiralty First Lord ever (if "second-rate" overall); but his importance in Ireland in the early 1880s was far greater, as a decisive and intelligent Viceroy with a will who had a good political head and a sharp appreciation of Parnellite talents. They both realized that moderate Home Rule need frighten no one, and contrary to the rumour put about by infuriated Unionists, Spencer reached his own conclusions about the necessity of some kind of measure more or less at the same time as Gladstone. Clarification of this point is not the least of the services rendered to his subject by Peter Gordon, whose immaculate editing of a wide range of Spencer material has provided a genuinely important new source for the 1880s and 1890s. (His Appendix also provides a useful guide to the papers, pending their cataloguing by the British Library.)

In some ways, the Spencer volumes take us still further into the familiar, slightly stuffy atmosphere of late-Victorian Liberal drawing-rooms. Gladstone trumpets on about Peel's government, the horrors of staying at Hawarden are feelingly recounted ("Poor dear Mrs Gladstone and the daughters, although most kind, and all meaning excellently, are very strange, and the girls utterly devoid of all consideration for their guests"). But there is a welcome asstringency in Spencer's own observations, as in his dislike for the Hamilton circle "swinging the censor" around the Grand Old Man. The material about Dublin Castle and its surveillance mechanisms is genuinely important; the implicit portrait of deliberately unpretentious Whiggery is memorable, and Gordon's introductions are models of their kind.

In the second of these, Gordon quotes a classic piece of bitchery from Arthur Balfour: "What an amazing spectacle - a man of 47, of an

can be done in this country by a noble presence and a great hereditary position and fine personal record, assisted by no intellectual parts of any kind! It is really very remarkable. Such a sweet, and even such a beautiful character, and no ability at all." This carries the authentic note of Cecil brutality, frequently captured in Robert Blake and Hugh Cecil's collection of essays on Salisbury. In the Cecil world, even after rapprochement with the Liberal Unionists in 1886, their leader the Marquess of Hartington remained "the man who betrayed Gordon" (and the agonized fifteenth Earl of Devon, uncertainly shifting between Conservative and Liberal administrations, was crisply referred to at Hatfield as "Titus Oates"). This strain of robust abuse provides some of the entertainment in a fascinating collection; still more comes from the observations of Lady Gwendolen Cecil, in the essay already referred to, where her father emerges as a Jane Austen creation.

When he found himself sitting next to a stranger or an acquaintance, his first reflection was "How bored they will be" - with the inevitably resulting conviction of how bored he himself would be. He often protested on the grounds of compassion against the issue of a proposed invitation: "Poor man, what has he done that you should ask him? - he will feel himself bound to accept and he will be so bored." Conversational enjoyment was all but impossible under such circumstances.

For connoisseurs of late-Victorian political biography a unique place has long been occupied by Lady Gwendolen's uncompleted *Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury*, tough, feline and funny in the Cecil manner. The tone is well sustained in Hugh Cecil's essay about his great-uncle, sympathetically analysing the nature of her masterpiece, and the reasons why it was never completed. Further biographical insight into Salisbury himself is provided by F. M. L. Thompson's absorbing treatment of his landholdings - particularly concentrating on the surprising picture of Salisbury as an urban landlord. Other pieces in the collection are equally distinguished, notably Andrew Porter's essay on diplomatic history, which con-

fronts general questions of interpretation in an important general treatment of foreign policy and domestic finance, while E. D. Steele demonstrates the significance of Salisbury's experience of government in microcosm at the India Office in 1866-7 and 1874-8. John France's essay on Salisbury and the Unionist Alliance is a clever reversal of many assumptions usually taken as read; he shows a Tory party firmly set on fusion, needing and angling for Whigs before Whigs looked for refuge from Gladstone. This carries much conviction, as does Dr France's treatment of Irish policy (itself owing much to Andrew Galle's pioneering work, recently published as *Ireland and the Death of Kindness: The experience of constructive Unionism 1890-1905*). France strikes energetically around him at predecessors who have in his view got the Conservative-Liberal Unionist balance wrong, and scores some good hits.

Otherwise, these essays delineate Salisbury's principled pessimism, seen early on in his journalism, but adulterated by the trimming enforced by nearly two decades of political power. (He told Lytton, apropos the latter's disastrous Indian policy, that absolute dogmatism was always a mistake outside the sphere of religion.) A certain degree of enigma inevitably remains. Salisbury's reputation, and his interest, owes much to his own articulateness - reflected in the pithy articles poured out for the journals in his days as an impoverished young man, as well as in the outrageous *bons mots* of a heyday spent *épantant les bourgeois*. One such celebrated comment, on the idea of representative parish councils, deserves quotation: "If, among the many duties the modern state undertakes, the duty of amusing the rural population should be included, I should rather recommend a circus or something of that kind." Irony apart, the astute manipulation of rhetorical bread and circuses would become the stock-in-trade of *fin-de-siècle* Conservatism.

Equally seriously, Salisbury remarked: "Representative bodies are the fashion of the day, and against a fashion it is almost impossible to argue." Edward Hamilton used the same

inconsistent and Byronic.

Between them, these three poured out articles and pamphlets, poems and books, mostly of very indifferent quality. But it was their contact with two other figures that transformed their musings into a movement. The first was the Rev Frederick William Faber, a leading disciple of John Henry Newman, who was obsessed with the fear that the Church was in danger - yet again. And the second was Benjamin Disraeli, who soon became their leader in Parliament, and who immortalized his friends in his three matchless novels of high politics, high society and high spirits, *Coningsby*, *Sybil* and *Tancred*.

All these men were addicted to the politics of nostalgia, and hated the developments of their day, especially liberalism, utilitarianism, democracy, the middle classes, industry and manufacturing. Instead, they espoused monasticism, feudalism and paternalism, taking as their heroes Archbishop Laud, Charles I and James II, the Jacobites, Bolingbroke and Byron. Chivalrous, romantic and absurdly quixotic, they looked to a revived Church, a strengthened monarchy, a reinvigorated aristocracy and a contented proletariat as the best hope for future salvation and stability.

But they did not get very far. Their policies - which included the placing of maypoles in every village to alleviate social distress, and the revival of the Royal Touch to bring the monarchy back into closer contact with the people - were met with widespread ridicule and incredulity, and even Disraeli's novels did not sell particularly well. Although the Young Englanders provided one more obstacle for Peel on his road to parliamentary martyrdom, they could claim no major political achievement to their credit.

Above all, they lacked unity of outlook and firmness of purpose. A week may be a long time in twentieth-century politics, but in the 1840s, four years of eccentric posturing and rebellious gestures were scarcely enough for this callow coterie to accomplish anything.

concept to account for the Unionist victory in 1895. "I am sure that among the contributing causes is the fashion of Conservatism. The upper classes in recent years have become much more Conservative, and the fashion which they set filters down from one class to another." This raises questions of political language which preoccupy Parry's study, as well as posing the problem of Liberalism's loss of that hegemony which it had apparently created by the 1870s. In 1894, Hamilton describes Gladstone at Hawarden, "never ceasing rejoicing at feeling himself a free man. He made one remark with great emphasis, and that related to the 'class-riddenness' of this country. He thought it was marvellous how the country had stood it." Parry points out that Liberal anxieties about "class" and its divisiveness sought answers in spiritual reconciliation rather than in economic or bureaucratic readjustment.

Late nineteenth-century Cecilian Conservatism took a more materialist line, and was accordingly more successful; other elements in the party combined this with adept obeisances to popular opinion (on occasion collectivists as well as imperialists) in a manner that has not yet been effectively analysed. Huxley violently accused Gladstone of "slavishly following average opinion [when] government by average opinion is merely a circuitous method of going to the devil". Salisbury, who would have agreed, proved more adept at capitalizing on "average opinion" than anyone could have anticipated. Early on in his *Quarterly Review* days he had decided that the basic political battle was one "not of parties but of classes"; "the struggle between property, be it amount small or great, and mere numbers". Yet the process whereby so much small property abandoned Liberalism for Conservatism remains largely unexplored. There has been much historical concentration on Salisbury, his colleagues and his opponents; the books under review are notable additions to a distinguished genre. But rather less attention has been paid to "average opinion"; and this may contain many of the answers to the questions raised by seismic shifts in political culture and political affiliation, then as now.

They found it difficult to put forward an agreed programme, they split irrevocably over the repeal of the Corn Laws, and they were further undermined when Faber went over to Rome. Not surprisingly, Disraeli gradually distanced himself from these politically pubescent colleagues, who lacked his staying power and his genius for survival and success.

All this is pleasantly enough told, and the author's family pique - he is the great-great-nephew of Father Faber - does not blind him to the very considerable limitations of the group whose antics and activities he so vividly evokes. He is particularly successful in conveying their rich and preposterous amalgam of ecclesiastical flummery, historical make-believe and social self-deception; and he captures the tone of unfulfilled homosexuality and rampant misogyny, sublimated into religious bigotry, by which such obscurantist groups seem invariably to be blighted.

Indeed, in the end, Young England achieved even less than Faber would have us believe. On the social habits, aesthetic values, political opinions and moral sensibilities of their time, the impact of the group was never more than minimal. And, in the light of the work of Robert Blake, Maurice Cowling and Paul Smith, it is simply absurd for the author to claim that Disraeli's mature policies of social and parliamentary reform were the long-intended implementation of his deeply held Young England beliefs.

Throughout, this excessively well-disposed book, what is basically lacking is any real sense of historical perspective. There is no attempt to see Young England for what it actually was - namely one more ephemeral episode from that long catalogue of forlorn hopes and troglodytic immaturity, which runs from Jacobitism, via the Fourth Party, to Belloc and Chesterton, and on to the Young (and sometimes not so young) Fogies of our own time. "Stripped of their period charm", Richard Faber rather implausibly informs us, Young England "yearn still to be taken seriously today." But by whom?

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Gabriel Josipovici

MARCEL PROUST
On Reading Ruskin: Prefaces to "La Bible d'Amiens" and "Sésame et les Lys", with selections from the notes to the translated texts Edited and translated by Jean Autret, William Burford and Phillip J. Wolfe
252pp. Yale University Press, £13.50
0 300 03813 6

It says something about British insularity that two of the greatest literary essays written this century have only recently become available in English. "On Reading", Proust's introduction to his translation of Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*, first appeared in 1971 in a limited edition, and now Yale have brought it out together with the introduction to Proust's other Ruskin translation, *The Bible of Amiens*, along with the very full set of notes Proust compiled for each work. They have been expertly edited and translated and the volume is introduced by a brilliant forty-page essay and a fascinating bibliographical note by Richard Macksey. It is an event for celebration.

But how, it may be asked, can a bibliography be fascinating? The answer is, if it concerns Proust. "L'oeuvre inédite de Proust n'existe pas", Bernard de Fallois has observed, and Macksey points out that "like all writings, the studies that Proust dedicated to Ruskin during the first years of this century constitute a complicated fabric of redactions, partial publications, and internal quotations. Even the titles... are unstable, undergoing transformations as they pass from journal to preface to *mélanges*." Everything Proust wrote was used again and again and gradually transformed as he slowly moved towards the creation of his one great work, where all he had ever felt, thought and written finally found its rightful form and place.

The great renunciation which was to lead to the future triumph was the laying aside of *Jean Santeuil* when more than a thousand pages of that fine Jamesian novel were done. Had it been published, Proust would never have been able to write *A la Recherche*, which is so different and yet so similar. As Maurice Blanchot has pointed out, it took great courage for Proust to suppress it in the face of pressures from his family and friends and no doubt from within to prove that he was not a total layabout. And the years that followed were hard ones. Like Dante between the *Vita Nuova* and the *Commedia*, Proust, dissatisfied with what seemed to him the frivolity of fiction, turned his hand to scholarship, criticism and aesthetics, leaving a trail of unfinished work behind

him, before he finally understood that it was not fiction that was wanting but only his own conception of it. And, like Dante, his years of study of other men's thoughts and deeds helped give the final fiction, when it eventually came, that unique combination of the lyric and the encyclopaedic which is characteristic of his work.

Proust began reading Ruskin in 1899 and finally abandoned him in 1906, when his translation of *Sesame and Lilies* was published. Ruskin himself had died in 1900, followed by Proust's father in 1903 and his mother in 1905. They were vital years in the making of the novelist. Ruskin's sense of the importance of place, his endless curiosity about the works of nature and man, his passion for the Middle Ages, his roots in Wordsworth, all gave Proust something he badly needed, and helped free him from the sterile aestheticism so prevalent in nineteenth-century France. Indeed, Proust's immersion, alone of all his French contemporaries, in nineteenth-century English literature, in George Eliot and Hardy as well as Ruskin, gave him access to a vein of Romanticism deeper and more genuine than anything found in the French tradition. It reinforced his own feeling that the world was a place of wonder if only we knew how to look, and that one did not have to travel to exotic places to be moved; and it gave him confidence in his intuition that art did not have to be either the product of purely private fantasies or of a massive deployment of will-power in the rendering of the surface of the world, as it was for Flaubert. On the contrary, art would only be valid if it was a joy to make, and the test that one was on the wrong track was precisely that one was taking no pleasure in the making. There is in the later Proust, as in Hardy and George Eliot and Ruskin, a massive confidence in the outside world and one's place in it, though Proust had to work hard and long to acquire that confidence, and he combines its expression with a wit quite alien to his English mentors.

The Bible of Amiens is one of the greatest guide-books ever written. Ruskin's passion not just for the cathedral but for the countryside in which it is set, his extraordinary feeling for the interaction of people and place, awakens an echo in Proust and leads, for example, to his memorable contrast of the Virgin of Amiens and the Mona Lisa:

A statue is thus forever part of a particular place on earth, of a certain city, that is to say a thing which has a name as a person has, which is an individual, of which no other exactly alike can ever be found on the face of the continents. . . . Such a statue perhaps has something less universal than a work of art; it holds us, at any rate, by a tie stronger than that of the work of art itself, one of those ties such as persons

and countries hold us by. . . . In my room a photograph of the Mona Lisa retains only the beauty of a masterpiece. Near her a photograph of the Vierge Dorée takes on the sadness of a souvenir.

The thought that a souvenir might have more meaning than a masterpiece goes against the entire Western aesthetic tradition, but once it has been articulated it cannot be denied. The insight was to be developed by Benjamin in his thoughts on aura, and popularized by John Berger. Here it leads Proust to write some wonderful pages not only on the Vierge Dorée but also on the little carving up in the cathedral roof, unseen for centuries but resurrected by Ruskin's eye and imagination:

He made a drawing of it; he spoke of it. And the harmless and monstrous little figurine will have come back to life, against all hope, from that death which seems more total than the others, which is the disappearance into the midst of infinite numbers and the leveling down of similarities, but from which genius quickly rescues us. . . . I was touched on finding the figurine there again; nothing therefore dies that has survived, no more the sculptor's thought than Ruskin's thought.

The translations were an arduous business, for Proust's English was poor; but he sought help wherever he could and he was driven by the best of all teachers, passion. The notes were an important part of the enterprise. There Proust tried to give the reader the sense he would have got from reading these works with a thorough knowledge of the rest of Ruskin's work behind him. For Proust sensed that Ruskin, like Balzac and Hugo, was only apparently a rambling writer, that beneath the diversity lay a profound unity, and he saw it as his task to bring this out. The role such a notion was to play in *A la Recherche* is well known. At the same time the sheer labour required by his project inculcated in Proust that habit of hard work which seems so foreign to Marcel but which of course lies behind the great novel. More than one kind of lesson was therefore learnt from the Master.

Yet the time was to come when Ruskin would start to seem a little false, a little limited. Macksey makes the excellent point that Proust's relations to the artists he admired tended to follow the same lines as Marcel's to the women he loved. Where a Swann could dismiss the entire experience of his passion for Odette with the words "she was not my type", what distinguished both Marcel and Proust himself was that no profound experience was ever seen by them as wasted. "On Reading" is Proust's meditation on why Ruskin was not, in the end, "his type". The essay works through a series of apparent paradoxes: that the days we recall most vividly from our childhood are precisely those we spent immersed in books; that art is not a conversation with the best minds of the past, as Ruskin thought, but something much deeper, much closer to the erotic than to the ethical, a solitary communion with the essence of a unique other; that if reading is thus more than Ruskin imagined, it is also less, for a book should be a threshold, not a shrine, it should help one discover one's own potential, not be the object of sterile worship. Thus Proust frees himself from what he sees as Ruskin's tendency to idolatry and fetishism, and he does this not by suppressing but by "placing" such tendencies. Eventually he will fully place them by embodying them in the person of Charles Swann.

What is extraordinary and has not so far as I know been remarked, is that the shape of the essay follows the contours of the great novel, as though that work were already present, just waiting to be kissed into life. It begins with the bliss of childhood evoked, develops into an examination of the paradoxes of interpretation, and ends with the discovery of how the original bliss can be recaptured as the past is lived again in the present. In the novel the final image is of the self as a man on stilts reaching back into Time; here it is of the two columns in the Piazzetta of St Mark standing tall and silent in the midst of the teeming crowds of tourists, an image both of the presence of the past and of the place of books in life.

Proust emerges from these essays and notes as one of the truly great critics. We respond to him, as a critic because we grow to trust his perceptions as a man. Many will no doubt read these essays as adjuncts to *A la Recherche*. But they are also masterpieces in their own right. It is good to have them in English at last, and so ably presented.

Critic as crime-writer

Humphrey Carpenter

J. I. M. STEWART
Myself and Michael Innes: A memoir
206pp. Gollancz, £12.95.
0 575 04104 8

In Michael Innes's *The Journeying Boy* (1949), the narrator refers ironically to "that milder sensational fiction, nicely top-dressed with a compost of literature and the arts, which is produced by idle persons living in colleges and rectories". The irony derives from the fact that Michael Innes is J. I. M. Stewart of Christ Church, Oxford, formerly a member of the English faculties at Leeds, Adelaide and Queen's, Belfast. The creator of Appleby, the detective never short of a literary allusion, is also the author of such solid critical works as *Eight Modern Writers* in the Oxford History of English Literature series.

That the two caps do not fit altogether easily on the same head—that there might be a Dodgson/Carroll split between Stewart and Innes—is suggested by the title of this autobiography. The book itself rather avoids the issue, cloaking everything under a donnish whimsicality of tone which fends off speculation about the inner reaches of personality. There are family photographs, but in the text a bare minimum of references to wife and children, while for an account of his own childhood Stewart concentrates on Edinburgh Academy—a schooling he has in common with R. L. Stevenson, whose *Kidnapped* has evidently been a huge influence on the Michael Innes stories.

Like Stevenson, Stewart was brought up among the Edinburgh New Town professional classes. "The general situation was distinctly not bookish", he remarks in one of his high-table asides. The Oxford he inhabited as an undergraduate in the late 1920s was so Victorian in character—he was befriended by the antiquated "Phelip", Provost of his college, Oriel, and in Phelps's company met a tramp who remembered the Brontës—that it is surprising to learn that he knew *The Waste Land*



J. I. M. Stewart and his mother; the photograph is reproduced from his book reviewed here.

"more or less by heart". In one of the book's few moments of self-revelation, Stewart wonders whether, in his personal relationships, he might himself not be "a sibling" of Prufrock.

Armed with a comfortable First in English, Stewart had a happy enough time teaching at Leeds University—where he gives a nice picture of Eliot himself, who had come to deliver a celebrity lecture, solemnly intoning against a background of heating pipes that clanked noisily for a while, and then "changed what might be called their tune. What they now suggested was nothing of a martial or of a fair-ground character. Their new suggestion was—the word must be written—indelicate." The periphrasis with which this anecdote is told is typical of *Myself and Michael Innes*, so that sometimes one wonders whether the real person behind it may not be a detective-story writer playing at being a don.

Egotist as philanthropist

Robin Hope

WILLIAM CLARK
From *Three Worlds: Memoirs*
286pp. Sidgwick and Jackson, £13.95.
0 283 99372 3

Historically, the more important part of *From Three Worlds* is the account of the World Bank from 1968 to 1980. William Clark arrived as its Director of Information and Public Affairs and rose to be Vice-President, External Relations. His stint coincided with Robert McNamara's tenure as its President, and the forty-six pages of these memoirs covering the period tell a loyal, even hero-worshipping lieutenant's story of how the former United States Secretary of Defense changed his spots and transformed the Bank from a sleepy, selective money-lender into a considerable engine of development for the Third World. In these years all the numbers grew twofold, threefold or more: dollars lent, dollars borrowed, countries served, staff employed, words written and spoken. From Pearson to Brandt, the record of the World Bank is an honourable one of vision, courage and hard work, of more battles won than were lost against the forces of caution, self-interest and corruption.

Some readers may find more amusement in Clark's earlier, slightly longer chapter about his job as Press Adviser to Anthony Eden at Downing Street in 1955-6. Part narrative and part diary, and purged (we are assured) of the highly coloured snippets of recollection with which the author used to entertain friends, this account belongs to the higher gossip school of memoir-writing. Nothing could be more appropriate for the tragic farce of Suez. Eden's complaints that the provincial press was going soft, or that there was an inaccurate story on an inside page of the *Evening Standard* (with the implication that Clark should do something about it) betray an extreme case of the Prime Ministerial disease of scouring the press for comfort. Clark snatched a holiday at a crucial

The autobiography's style, more than any facts it reveals, takes us near the heart of the question, why should a don, or at least this particular don, write detective fiction? Stewart lets out that among fellow dons he has always been "oppressively conscious" of being less

Teacher as searcher

Mansel Stimpson

ROSEMARY MANNING
A Corridor of Mirrors
234pp. Women's Press. Paperback, £5.95.
0 7043 4054 2

In 1971, before her retirement from teaching, Rosemary Manning published under a pseudonym what amounted to a slice of autobiography, concerning a lesbian relationship. That book, *A Time and a Time*, was recently reissued under her own name and with a new introduction. These facts might foster the expectation that *A Corridor of Mirrors* would be in every sense a finished autobiography. The first hint to the contrary lies in the prefatory quotation from Gertrude Stein: it expresses doubts about memory and the ability to know one's true self. Later, commenting on her own writing, Manning says: "I quarry myself", and it is clear that the process is a continuing one.

In her seventies Rosemary Manning is still developing but, more than that, she is still looking at her past, her family, her friends and herself with fresh insight and understanding. Even now there are portions of her life she cannot bring herself to write about, and she admits it. Equally one senses that her views of what she has written about may yet undergo further changes. This enhances the book, making

"intellectual" than them. Actually it is clear from his narrative that there has never been anything remotely defective in his intellect: he merely happened to be studying and teaching English at a time when that subject was in the doldrums and offered no academic discipline comparable to that of his colleagues, a situation that could easily engender an inferiority complex. Stewart's evident feeling, at least at a subconscious level, that his subject had let him down, was exacerbated by spending ten years teaching in Australia, where he quickly discovered that really clever Australians didn't become professors, and he was among amiable second-raters. Not surprisingly, Stewart began to retreat altogether from the academic waste land, and the first result was *Death at the President's Lodging* (1936).

At their best, the Michael Innes thrillers are inspired romances in the tradition of Stevenson and Buchan, and it is sad that the autobiography leaves the impression that Stewart has never really appreciated his own talent. His output has been prodigious—quite apart from the Innes books, and a substantial amount of critical-biographical work, he has produced twenty novels and half-a-dozen books of short stories under his own name—and he has given much entertainment to more than one generation. One regrets, therefore, that *Myself and Michael Innes* has been (in his own words, of a character in one of his stories) so "artfully-cadenated" as to cloak the man, or maybe the two men, who have written it.

ing clear as few autobiographies have done that we are never finished with our past. Other felicities are of a more orthodox kind: the finely drawn portrait of her parents and siblings (she was much the youngest child and the three others were boys); her view of what her own writing entails ("to tell my own truth clearly—the commission laid upon every artist"); her forthright ideas ("I believe that teaching tends to hold back one's development in personality, in ideas and one's mental and psychological growth. Ideally no one should enter the profession under thirty, and all should leave it by forty-five"); her emotional needs which transformed her quest for the person she longed to love into a search for somebody who could supply "the recognition of my own self through her love for me".

The main weakness of *A Corridor of Mirrors* lies in the inclusion of the last five chapters, which, although clearly deeply felt, really belong elsewhere as essays or articles, as does an earlier passage about society's treatment of the elderly. In particular, Manning's responses to key issues of the 1980s, such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the work of Amnesty International, are not sufficiently unusual to justify their place. But most of the book is personal in the best sense, living up to her assertion that "anything of worth I can offer from my own personality I want to bestow and to share".

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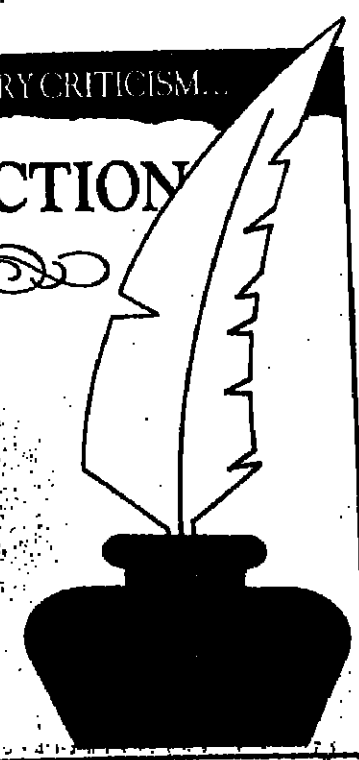
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Don Carlos
Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester

British playgoers, if they think of Schiller's *Don Carlos* as anything more than a shadowy presence behind Verdi's flamboyant opera, probably suspect it of being worthy but unperformable, a compound of stodgy philo-sophizing and implausible *Sturm und Drang*. If so, as many of them as possible should make their way to Manchester, where Nicholas Hytner's production will offer them a revelation. Disciplined, crackling with energy and fully alive to the intricate dance of emotional and political tensions in this Chinese-box of a play, it establishes *Don Carlos* as a masterpiece of genuinely Shakespearean richness and subtlety: if not in language (James Maxwell's translation, for all its terse and fluid eloquence, cannot tell us that) then at any rate in complexity of characterization, suggestive ingenuity of plotting and the humane, many-sided intelligence which subjects every political and emotional stance to compassionate criticism.

Richard Hudson designs the production in stark black and white, the Cardinal's robes of the Grand Inquisitor providing a single, startling blaze of colour. Court ladies and grandees stalk stiffly across the black-tiled, cruciform stage, or shuffle and bob ludicrously backwards out of the royal presence in a grotesque ballet of constricting court etiquette.

The rituals of home

Julian Graffy

JOHN BERGER and NELLA BIELSKI
A Question of Geography
The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon

In 1937, Yevgeniya Ginzburg, teacher, journalist and wife of Pavel Aksyonov, a party official in Kazan, was arrested and imprisoned. Soon afterwards Aksyonov himself disappeared in the Purges. In 1939 Ginzburg was deported to Kolyma. Released into administrative exile in the town of Magadan in 1947, she met the man who would become her second husband, the prisoner doctor, Anton Val'ter. On October 9, 1948, after superhuman efforts, she was re-united in Magadan with her son, Vasily Aksyonov, later to be the most popular prose writer of the generation of the 'Thaw'. In 1949 she was briefly re-arrested. Ginzburg has told her story in her memoirs, *Into the Whirlwind* and *Within the Whirlwind*, which, along with the writings of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Georgy Vladimov and Sergey Dolzhenov, are among the most eloquent witnesses to life within and around the Soviet prison-camp zone. The reunion of mother and son is described with great poignancy in *Within the Whirlwind*, and also in Aksyonov's novel, *The Burn*, published in the United States where the author continues to live in exile. It is a measure, perhaps, of the relative extent of the present liberalization that none of the writers mentioned above is either published or announced for publication in the Soviet Union.

A Question of Geography, first performed in Marseille in 1983, is dedicated to Yevgeniya Ginzburg. It tells the story of Daria Petrovna (Dacha—the French transliteration have been carefully preserved in the printed text and may cause English readers some confusion about pronunciation), a former Kolyma prisoner now in forced exile in Magadan; of her love for the prisoner, Dr Ernst Mosevich Oizermann; of their fellow exiles, and of her reunion with her son, Sacha. This is not, however, Ginzburg's story; the play is set in 1952, and Dacha's first husband turns out to be still alive.

The horror ever lurking in these people's lives is powerfully evoked in John Caird's production as guards stride menacingly about the back of the stage. The play unfolds as an elaboration of the forces that can sustain the struggle against inhumanity, from the search for God to a visit to the cinema. Above all,

Ian McDiarmid gives an outstanding and subtle performance as Philip II. He is a believable despot, his paranoid domestic tyranny over his wife and son a convincing metaphor for the Spanish oppression of the Protestant Netherlands. Yet he wins our respect, even our grudging admiration, by his lonely stoicism, by his savagely humorous penetration of his self-seeking courtiers' fake humility, and by his readiness to recognize real honesty and intelligence when he meets them.

He is effectively complemented in quite different ways by Reece Dinsdale's Marquis of Posa and Michael Grandage's Don Carlos. Posa is Schiller's spokesman, and his confrontations with Philip offer us the fantastic gratifications of watching Romantic liberalism, freedom of thought and "the rights of human nature" confronting Counter-Reformation absolutism; the revolutionary eighteenth century arguing with the sixteenth. Yet the scenes are not allowed to stiffen into allegory or abstraction: Dinsdale gives Posa passion and idealism, but also a mischievous delight in intrigue and provocation which charms but also disturbingly substantiates Philip's accusations of egocentric irresponsibility. The King, on the other hand, grows almost paternal: it seems altogether natural that he should choose Posa, the one outspoken man in his kingdom, for a friend; equally natural that Posa, from the noblest motives, should lie to him, betray his trust and at last, in an attempt at glorious self-sacrifice, precipitate the death of Carlos himself.

Michael Grandage plays Carlos as victim rather than hero. His obsessive hatred of his

father, justified though it is, distracts him at every turn. Grandage gives him a physical gaucherie that reflects his mental imbalance, and a slight awkwardness of timing in his speech that puts him subtly out of phase with the other characters, a precise correlative of his propensity for acting always too soon or too late. It is one of the most unpleasant yet intelligent features of the play that Philip is right in viewing his son as a weakling. Superficially a charismatic and rebellious figure, in reality Carlos performs almost every action at the behest of someone else. Grandage allows this fatal passivity to emerge without depriving the prince of his volatile energy or his attractive innocence. Melinda McGraw, effectively combining impulsiveness with cynicism as the Princess of Eboli, nicely dramatizes, in her attempted seduction of the Prince, the dangers that lurk in his unformed character.

In a play full of surprises, James Maxwell's Grand Inquisitor, introduced late in the last act, delivers the greatest shock of all. Blind, tottering on two white sticks, physically ravaged by extreme old age, he yet towers in his scarlet robes, seemingly held upright by a fanaticism so extreme and articulate that he is able instantly to turn the tables on Philip and force the audience into a complete reassessment of the play's action so far. Lecturing the King with patiently weary patronage on the Church's plans for Posa and for Spain, he reduces him to a sheepish simpleton, who will hand over his son to the Inquisition less from vindictiveness than as a final gesture of absolute moral and political defeat.

of escape. As Gricha, an old exile, puts it, Sacha is so far only a "tourist" in Magadan. Sacha too, however, learns from harsh experience, and his decision to stay in Magadan is evidence of his maturation.

A *Question of Geography* is not without its weaknesses. Though Sacha's father is announced as still alive (and his letter read out by the clumsy device of a disembodied voice on a darkened stage), nothing is made of the consequences of this fact for the life of Dacha and Ernst. Life is made to look too attractive in Sue Blane's set. The part of Gricha is written, and played by Jimmy Gardner, with inappropriate levity. One unbelievable scene in which he and Sacha stage a mock-trial, with Gricha wearing a joke Stalin moustache, shows that the authors, for all their concern, have been unable to express the true horror of Siberian exile. The production is taken at far too slow a pace—three hours for a text of this length is too long.

As the play progresses, however, and June turns to August, it achieves gravity and pity. The cast is excellent. In the last scene, as winter returns, Dacha's warning words ring out: "It isn't over. It's not finished. It's not the end."

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 348
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than October 16. The solution and results will appear on October 23.

1 Ere magic poets felt the goal,
Ere Darwin whelped the Church in doubt,
Ere Apollonia had found out
The round world must be right;
When Gladstone, bluest of the blue,
Read all Augustine's follies through;
When France was tame, and no one knew
We and the Czar would fight.

2 Let it be admitted at once, mournful as the admission is, that every instinct in his intelligence went out at first to greet the new light. It had hardly done so, when a revolution of the opening chapter of "Genesis" checked it at the outset. He consulted with Carpenter, a great investigator, but one who was fully as incapable as himself of remodelling his ideas with regard to the old, accepted hypothesis. They both determined, on various grounds, to have nothing to do with the terrible theory, but to hold steadily to the law of the fixity of species.

3 He had taken a great deal of pains with his sermon, which was on the subject of geology—then coming to the fire pit a theological digression. He showed that far as geology was worth anything at all—and he was

Uncertain ends

Lois Potter

CYRIL TOURNEUR
The Revenger's Tragedy
Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

The Revenger's Tragedy is, to use one of its favourite words, "uncertain", not only in its authorship but in its very nature. The plot is grim enough: a court which apparently devotes all its time to raping and poisoning women finally topples, at a push from the single-minded revenger, Vindice, like a series of dominoes. The ironic reversals which lead to this ending suggest farce, but they are accompanied by a steady stream of misogynistic and *memento mori* comments. Its uncertainty is precisely what makes it, in spite of its subject-matter, an exhilarating emotional sauna.

Di Trevis's production for the Royal Shakespeare Company, playing up both the comic and the horrific, gets the balance about right. Lussurioso, released from prison, is surprised when his brothers shrink back from him—they had just been celebrating his execution—and, misunderstanding their reaction, sniffs his armpits. When Vindice and Hippolito force a cup into the already stiff hand of the murdered Duke, we hear the sound of breaking bones. But the chilly moral is not ignored: a God is watching all this, in the form of a large three-bladed fan revolving about the stage, and the thunder comes when Vindice calls for it.

The set and costumes (by Michael Levine) pick up the play's references to masques, torches, "artificial noon", and the strange metallic imagery which turns the human body into a robot. Most of the characters are in fact programmed to go straight for sex even in the form of another robot. The nobility talk like East End minders, and the dual family, half-heard going through a non-stop masque, are like out-of-work actors dressed in old Christmas decorations.

The social contrasts are Dickensian: Vindice's family aren't merely living in genteel poverty; they huddle in a garret, feeding on scraps which Hippolito smuggles out of the court. Realistically, this seems nonsensical: why would Lussurioso bother to send a courier to woo this beggarly Castiza? But the court has built its mansion in the place of excrement. A "scavenger" occasionally slithers out from under a rock to plunder the bodies. He is last seen sizing up the elderly new duke.

In a cast which is mostly asked to perform stylish variations on evil, Nicholas Farrell's impressive Lussurioso makes the most of the character's intellectual grasp of the moral values which he ignores in practice, and David Howey, as the Duke, is a nice combination of feebleness and unexpected sharpness. In the midst of this corruption, Stella Goner's Castiza is passionately rather than frigidly virtuous and her confrontation with Vindice and her mother (Linda Spurrier, surprisingly sympathetic) is a high point of the production. As Vindice, whose part has everything—disguises, funny accents, asides, instant changes of mood, and a love-scene with a skull—Anthony Sher gives the best and most controlled performance I have yet seen from him. His disguises are a *tour de force* (as Plato, with blood-red hair, beard, and gloves, he looks a foot taller than the "poor scholar" Vindice), but his real achievement is that he makes his lines, with their mixture of sensuality and sermonizing, both compelling and intelligible. The performance unsettles right up to the final speech: here, as with the nightmare soliloquy in *Richard III*, one expects to see the "true" self—but there is no such person, and thus no sense of closure.

For once, the textual alterations are improvements. Vindice, as Plato, now says the line about murderers revealing themselves to him that he harks back, ironically, at the end. Antiope's description of his wife's rape is transposed to the trial scene, where she is seen, sobbing, beside him. The court's cynical attitude to the crime thus becomes the cause of her suicide. As in the 1966 RSC production, the Duchess and Spurrier get extra lines—mostly witty couplets. Why aren't we told who wrote them? There are enough authorship problems in this play as it is.

Getting rid of the elephants

Graham Bradshaw

GIUSEPPE VERDI
Aida
Theatre Royal, Glasgow

The very first performance of *Aida* was not a success, and the most influential Italian music critic of the time, Filippo Filippi, attributed the failure to the work's "strange duality" and "curiously abrupt" transitions: Verdi had accepted the "operatic ideas" and "tendencies" of the "modern school", while retaining a "huge affection for his own past", so that his latest opera lurched from "one style to another".

The first production in Scottish Opera's new season is a spectacular but rather belligerently analytical Scottish-Belgian co-production which provokes thought about Verdi's work while making emotional engagement more difficult. That sounds Brechtian, and indeed the director, Gilbert Deflo, worked with the Berliner Ensemble and then with Giorgio Strehler, before becoming Director of the Belgian National Opera at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels. Like Filippi, Deflo finds *Aida* curiously dualistic: "There are two *Aidas*. The one, an elegiac chamber piece between three people, Radames, Amneris and Aida herself; the other, the huge, epic spectacle: gigantomania."

Deflo's solution is to stage the problem, performing *Aida* as a "chamber piece" set in the 1870s. Spectacle there is, but it now corresponds with that of the 1869 opening of the Suez Canal, when the Canal was formally blessed in the presence of assorted Imperial and Royal visitors. For Deflo, "any Egyptian presence in the piece is written from an 1870s perspective": the opera "tells us nothing about ancient Egypt" but a great deal about late nineteenth-century "attitudes", about "imperialism, nationalism and racism". Accordingly, his production tells us a great deal about late twentieth-century attitudes to the nineteenth century.

Self-referential soliloquies

David Nokes

BEN JONSON
The Magnific Lady
Adapted by Peter Barnes
Radio 3

As if echoing the RSC's recent attempts to popularize some of Ben Jonson's lesser-known plays, Radio 3 chose to celebrate the 350th anniversary of Jonson's death not with one of the familiar favourites, but with a production of *The Magnific Lady* (1632). Adapted by Peter Barnes and directed by Ian Cottrell, it provided a rare and welcome opportunity to hear one of his final plays. What emerged was a meditative, self-conscious, self-referential drama in which the ageing playwright appears to isolate and scrutinize the elements of his art like a scientist constructing an experiment. Each act of this five-act comedy is enclosed by a critical debate between Damplay and Probec, two customers at the Jonsonian drama-shop, and the resident shop-boy. With a mixture of defensiveness and self-advertisement the boy runs through the repertoire of the house, from *Every Man in His Humour* to *The New Inn*; while expounding the Jonsonian doctrine of the humours. Nor are such self-regarding moments confined to these critical interludes. The characters in the play itself are also consciousnesses of Jonson's art, breaking off from their pursuit of dowries, maidenheads or buried treasure to comment on the virtues of his epigrams or to debate the qualities of his latest play. The effect is rather as if Hamlet, in his advice to the players, had invited them to study *Titus Andronicus*.

This self-consciousness extends into the plot, which draws attention to its own contrivances in a manner more reminiscent of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern than Volpone*. When wrote them? There are enough authorship problems in this play as it is.

Transposing any opera or play to another period is difficult because it calls for a kind of sustained punning. Here Deflo's *Aida*, like Patrice Chéreau's *Ring*, showed how critically interesting ideas and concepts easily run foul of practical musical-dramatic exigencies. As Shaw, Chéreau and Thomas Mann all saw, there are good reasons for thinking of Wotan as a late nineteenth-century industrialist; but if he is actually to appear in a frock-coat his spear becomes a liability. *Aida*, like *Don Carlos*, does indeed reveal Verdi's hatred of priests and popes, so that Deflo is in one sense right to insist that Verdi "clearly saw Ramfis as a Pope" or as "a Khomeini, if you like"; but that connection—"seeing as"—is actually less clear when Ramfis no longer appears as an ancient Egyptian priest, since it is harder to know just what he is, or does.

Getting rid of the elephants and allowing beards doesn't matter. Eliminating the sacred priestess does, because the music we hear no longer connects with anything we see on stage. In more general terms, what we see in this production—the paraphernalia of pith helmets, lantern shows and imperial bustles—makes its own fascinating sense, but only as a comment, imposed from without, on what we are no longer allowed to see. Analysis displaces the object of analysis: the commentary is staged, rather than the text.

Which makes it all the more intriguing that the conductor, John Mauceri, is so concerned to allow us to hear what Verdi specified in matters of tempo. Here there are challenging jolts of a quite different sort, since Mauceri's study of Verdi's conducting score for the Paris première convinced him that later conductors like Toscanini distorted Verdi's "temporal structures" and disregarded quite specific metronome markings. Not that the latter necessarily establish the former: much depends on whether we think listeners would pick up long-range connections—say between the marking for the Act One prelude and the identical marking for the conclusion of the *Aida*-*Amnaso* duet. To judge by this production this promises to be an exciting but controversial season.

protest at this deliberate piece of dramatic legerdemain. But in the next act Jonson promptly changes plot again to make Placentia herself a changeling. While in the final act he digs up yet another plot-line to send his characters off in search of buried gold. By such overt manipulation Jonson seems to expose the arbitrariness of narrative. His interest in this play, subtitled *Humours Reconciled*, is less in the melody of events than in the harmony of humours.

Peter Barnes's adaptation sticks faithfully to the main lines of the play, merely pruning away some of his more didactic exchanges and esoteric verbal games. Sir Moth Interest's inflationary estimate of the eight reasons for desiring infinite wealth is thrifly cut back to six brief points; a prolonged debate on varieties of valour is prudently abridged. The chief casualty of the cuts is Jonson's bawdy. Inevitably many of his salacious puns and quibbles would be lost on modern listeners, and few would seriously lament the dignifying abbreviation of "survivorship" to "reverently". But where modern slang retains the sense of Jonson's *double-entendres* the alterations are more questionable. Jonson's Parson Palate "pricks all the guests" but in this version he merely "selects all the guests". A number of such bowdlerizations has the unfortunate effect of losing the tang of Jonson's colloquial humour.

John Moffat is suitably fastidious as Sir Disaphones Silksworm, and Peter Eyre impressively pedantic as the lawyer Practice. Ian Cottrell's well-paced direction gives as much coherence as possible to this episodic play, though his habit of interrupting the longer speeches with grunts of approval or surprise seems to betray a certain nervousness about the attentiveness of his listeners.

The Royal Shakespeare Company's production of Ben Jonson's *The New Inn*, directed by John Caird, will open at the Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, on November 4.



"Mémorisation VIII", 1978, by Jean Dubuffet, from an exhibition Works on Paper 1974-85, at Waddington Galleries until October 24.

Evading escape-art

Wilfrid Mellers

STEPHEN SONDHEIM and JOHN WEIDMAN
Pacific Overtures
Coliseum

Without resorting to the political terms of John Lahr's remark that "musicals are America's right-wing political theatre because they reinforce the dreams that support the status quo", we cannot help being depressed that so many people, over so many consecutive performances (compared with any opera), spend so much money on so dispiriting an entertainment. In the heyday of humanism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the aristocracy squandered colossal sums on concocting shows intended to kid themselves into believing they had created a terrestrial paradise. Such masques masked truth. Ironically, so do those created, at comparable expense, by today's industrial plutocracy for the common man, since they exploit modern technology to encourage escape from the very world technology has brought to birth.

The origins of the American musical were in Europe, in Viennese, French and English operetta. It became the escape-art of industrial technocracy when it absorbed elements of American vaudeville and minstrel shows, while defusing the blacker strains within them. A few minor composers of musicals—Jerome Kern, trained in Europe, Irving Berlin, not trained at all—added to the sum of human delight. Even they, however, did not counteract the sentimental evasiveness of the genre; and although once in a while a musical has erupted that attempts to confront some aspect of reality, the issues are usually blurred and often falsified.

The natural successor to Gershwin and Bernstein, Stephen Sondheim first made his mark in *West Side Story* (1957) for which he, with a verbal facility no less dazzling but more astute than Ira Gershwin's, was Bernstein's "lyricist". In addition to theatrical cannicness, Sondheim has an instinctive musical ear, and both talents were spotted by his first mentor from the world of musical theatre, Oscar Hammerstein II. Since 1970 he has, in collaboration with the director Hal Prince, produced a series of shows variously entertaining, yet always tinged with a mordant acerbity responsive to human folly or distress. The climax to the cycle, *Sweeney Todd* (1979), rivals *Porgy and Bess* in dealing with contemporary reality in a totally unevanescent manner.

Pacific Overtures, running for fewer than 200 performances on Broadway, was, like *Sweeney Todd* a pecuniary failure, though it is now presented in an opera-house as a potential money-spinner. It predates *Sweeney* by three years, and it cannot challenge the later piece. As always with Sondheim, however, it is about something that matters: the impingement on the old religious-feudal Japan of Western European and especially American technology. In tracing the saga, from the mid-nineteenth-century expedition of Commodore

Perry to the present day, Sondheim is open-eyed and open-eared about the complexity of the issues. At a basic historical level he faces reality by getting his facts right; and then lights on the bright notion of equating the human theme with its technical realization. For he submits the ancient conventions of Japanese theatre to streamlined American technology on the musical and dramatic planes alike, allowing the ironies to operate in both directions. This works because Kabuki, like an American musical and unlike a Japanese Noh play, is a still living popular art mixing speech, song, dance, mime, clowning and slapstick. Sondheim's score opens with the antique wail of an authentic shakuhachi (magically played at the Coliseum by Yoshikazu Iwamoto), and with near-authentic Kabuki percussion and simulated koto: which sounds are, through the course of the evening, gradually engulfed in the electronic of the modern world. In the process Sondheim hints that the "old" Japanese culture and the "new" American technology need one another for survival.

The process is intelligent rather than heart-felt. The mechanized gimmickry of a Broadway musical is employed by Ralph Koltai and Marie-Jean Lecca to produce sets and costumes of considerable visual beauty. The musical imitations and parodies—whether of the whines of Japanese cantillation and the twanging or oriental instruments, or of military marches and pop music—are sometimes arresting and usually clever, though not as clever as the stage business: in which Eric Roberts and Harry Nicol are especially hilarious.

The piece's limitation lies in the fact that, despite its theatrical panache and skill, its musical substance remains tenuous. As a synthesis of East and West, *Pacific Overtures* skims the surface compared with *Madama Butterfly*, let alone Britten's inspired metamorphosis, in *Curtain River*, of an esoteric Japanese Noh play into an English medieval morality play updated. Still, Sondheim, is not making an operatic tragedy; and if *Pacific Overtures* doesn't get under the skin, as does *Sweeney Todd*, it works on its own level. The ill-male cast, each member playing several roles, as in real Kabuki, adapt their operatic training to produce the speech-inflected vocal nuances and meticulous metrical precision which the genre calls for. Richard Angas as the narrator gives a multi-voiced virtuoso performance; Simon Masterman-Smith is deliciously deft in his patter-song; Graham Fletcher's electrifying Lion Dance alone justifies the evening.

Such malleability between technical brilliance and the emotional overtone gives Sondheim's work its distinction: as is revealed in Keith Warner's production and James Holmes's conducting. Although *Pacific Overtures*, skirting the more sinister aspects of Americanization, has more in common with an ordinary musical than one had expected, one can hardly dismiss it as bland. In its cool intelligence, its theatrical flair, its very lack of the invidiously inane tune, it is neither corrupt nor corrupting. It waves a small flag on behalf of the human mind and sensibility.

Rules of play

David Hughes

WILLIAM P. MALM
Six Hidden Views of Japanese Music
222pp. University of California Press. £17.25.
0520050452

Exposure to Japanese music is on the rise in England. Noh and Kabuki troupes seem to turn up annually; Radio 3 has broadcast – and rebroadcast – a series of shakuhachi (bamboo flute) recitals; an all-British Japanese court music (gagaku) ensemble has recently made its public debut. The English National Opera's new production of *Pacific Overtures* (reviewed on page 1049) features a Japanese shakuhachi player in the pit (albeit playing the music of Southem).

Exposure leads to familiarity but also not necessarily to understanding. Reviewers of concerts in the recent "Music of the Royal Courts" series at the South Bank, confronted with performances from nearly a dozen countries, were often driven to respectful silence: how could they tell whether a performance by, say, a Japanese epic singer was radiant, pedestrian or awful by Japanese standards? Without the knowledge to risk such judgments, one's appreciation must be less than complete. Through nearly three decades of writing about Japanese music, William Malm has striven to provide the Western reader with such knowledge.

His new book is not an introductory survey of Japanese traditional music; Malm, Professor of Music at the University of Michigan, wrote that book in 1959 and it has yet to be superseded. The present book consists of six case studies of music from those genres most congenial to Malm: Nagauta (Kabuki dance music) and Noh theatre music. The book is aimed at a musically literate audience; determined readers with a musicological bent will be rewarded.

Over the years Malm has championed the

view that non-Western music systems must satisfy demands similar to those of the European harmonic tradition – balancing novelty and familiarity, tension and release – and that they do so in different but equally logical ways. There is in this endeavour the hint of a desire to legitimize Japanese music – and the ethnomusicologist's concerns in general – in the eyes of Western musicologists, but Malm's efforts are no less successful or valuable for that. In the present book it is perhaps the last of the six "hidden views" that most overtly demonstrates this point: Malm offers a section-by-section musical comparison of Britten's *Curling River* with the Noh play *Sumidagawa* from which its libretto was derived. (The reader will want to obtain the cassette tape of musical examples which costs £6.50; Western notation cannot convey the subtleties of Japanese music.) Each of the six Views, however, testifies to the well-tuned aesthetic system permeating Japanese musical culture as a whole.

The First View examines the aesthetics underlying the manufacture and appreciation of one type of drum, the *kotozumi*, which features prominently in both Kabuki and Noh music. Based primarily on written treatises, this chapter introduces the extreme subtleties involved in evaluating the tone colour of even a seemingly simple drum. It says much about the social status of this drum that the two authorities most frequently cited, joint authors of a 1917 study, are respectively an executive of the Asahi Beer Company and an architect who, like his samurai father, had studied Noh.

The Second View takes us from the drum's construction into the experience of a drum lesson. Much of the instruction seems from a Western perspective to have little to do with sound production; the ultimate goal, Malm feels, "may be spiritual rather than musical". (Perhaps also ethical: Japanese often say, "There are no bad people among those who study [traditional] music.") Thus there is an emphasis on doing things in the correct way – picking up a drum, for example – even when

nobody is watching. Japan shares with the rest of Asia a preference for teaching by concrete example rather than by explanation, and for learning rhythmic and melodic patterns in context rather than as abstract, separable elements; not surprisingly, then, one theme of this book is the way in which the form of a given musical element will vary in context and over time according to "a host of theoretical, musical, choreographic, and sociological factors" – Malm's musical "theory of relativity". As in a modern Japanese business contract, when conditions change, prior understandings are invalidated.

A sixteen-page interlude provides an excellent brief introduction to "General principles of Japanese music", touching on matters such as the importance of silence, the value of notational vagueness, and the communal nature of Japanese composition.

The remaining four Views are studies of particular pieces. These are more than "views"; they are detailed examinations of the devices of Japanese composition. The Third View compares a single story in its Noh and Kabuki (Nagauta) versions, yielding insights into the respective musical idioms of these two theatrical genres. Here as throughout, Malm peppers his narrative with Zen-like quotations. For example, to perform the highly rubato percussion passage known as *raijo*, "one has to

feel as though one were a large rubber band that stretches with great tension and then suddenly snaps".

The Fourth View compares one Nagauta piece with the urban festival music on which it is based. The Fifth View, dealing with interpretation, compares four performances of a single Nagauta. All of the Nagauta studies offer excellent descriptions of Japanese text-setting practice, a long-standing concern of Malm's.

The final View – text setting by Britten and *la japonaise* – reveals that each work is true to its cultural conventions. To avoid merely composing a pastiche of a Noh play, Britten intentionally limited his sonic exposure to Noh; thus this chapter is much more than a mere game of "spot-the-Noh-influence". Two different aesthetics are at work: "the Noh requires infrequent use of sonic... conventions that are common to the entire repertoire, and Western drama concentrates on frequent use and development of motives that are peculiar to the specific composition" (emphasis added).

This is a difficult book for readers with little knowledge of Japanese music. No other author, however, has so successfully explored the aesthetic detail of this music from both a native and a comparative perspective; and perhaps the musicologists of the West are now ready for such a book.

The search for wisdom

Arnold Whittall

DONALD MITCHELL (Editor)
Benjamin Britten: "Death in Venice"
229pp. Cambridge University Press.
£27.50 (paperback, £9.95).
0521263347

This Cambridge Opera Handbook – the fourteenth – is unusual. The opera under scrutiny – Britten's last – is recent, and the contributors include several of those most closely associated with its genesis and first singing. The result is very much the inside story, as well as the case for the defence at its most eloquent and comprehensive. The handbook format promotes a certain lack of perspective. Yet despite the absence of extended comparisons with other operas by Britten or anyone else, or of a detailed critique, it cannot be claimed that *Death in Venice* is here being praised with undue extravagance by those with vested interests. The emphasis is primarily on how the work was put together, and how it relates to Thomas Mann's novella. It is already to some degree a familiar story, but this book provides the fullest and most up-to-date version. There is a reasonable balance between new and reprinted material, the latter even embracing a brief article from 1965 about the man held to be the original of Mann's Tadzio. The chapter on Visconti's film may be thought superfluous, yet it underlines one of the book's virtues: its concern with Mann as well as Britten.

Death in Venice was composed at a time of particular stress and strain for Britten, but it grew to completion with remarkable speed. As the librettist Myfanwy Piper says, "it took a little over two and a half years from our first conversation to the first night at Snape" – the absence of an "only" indicating that such a pace was normal for Britten. The sense of a race against time is appropriate enough, given the opera's subject. But, as always with Britten, speed brought risks, and the possibility of a result more sketchy than intense could not be ruled out. It is arguable that other composers – Berg, Henze – might have created a more opulently decadent Venice, and a more imposing Aschenbach. But the fascination of Britten's opera lies in the levels of translation it embodies. What might have been an expressionist melodrama becomes something altogether more redolent. The work is poised between the stylizations of chamber opera and the more "realistic" attributes of the post-Verdian tradition to which Britten was heir, not indecisively but with a sure instinct for what was to make of conventions and expectations. To English critics Britten's Aschenbach can seem especially ambivalent: a master of German prose, yet also an ageing, anglicized, puritan Narcissus for whom the Adriatic beach is

transformed into the ghostly simulacrum of a public-school playing-field. Bayan Northcott, whose 1973 *New Statesman* review is reprinted here with a postscript that by no means wholly recants his initial reservations, found a "pre-school nostalgia" in the beach games, and other critics singled out this scene from Act One for their principal praise. As the opera has grown more familiar, however, this scene, and this aspect of characterization, have been accepted as vital contributors to the work's two principal qualities: not just its ambivalence, but also its diversity.

In their different ways the various technical commentaries in this handbook stress the opera's unifying elements – thematic, tonal, twelve-note; one writer, Eric Roseberry, declares that "this is indeed a symphonic opera, which is shaped into what resembles a vastly extended movement in the manner of Mahler". What the book lacks is a complementary study of the opera's diverse forms: the way the *secco* recitative and a rich variety of "numbers" coexist, uneasily at times, to propel the drama. As John Evans implies, the work is indeed as much about polarities as unities, and those polarities are deeply embedded in its forms and textures as well as its pitch-procedures and stylistic perspectives (from neobaroque recitative to those pervasive evocations of the gamelan).

Clash and conflict are after all endemic to the story itself, to its concern with the power of the beautiful to inspire – and destroy. Donald Mitchell provides an eloquent explication of the opera as an "integrated work of art that culminates in the disintegration of its protagonist without itself disintegrating". As T. J. Reed observes, Aschenbach's disintegration is itself the result of a tragic failure: Aschenbach "has pursued not beauty through Tadzio but only the beautiful Tadzio". He has in fact abandoned his search for the wisdom to which that beauty should lead.

Britten, unsparsingly honest in his creative vision, did not seek to translate away the ultimate decadence of Mann's Aschenbach. And the ineffable sadness of the counterpoint in the opera's postlude, between music associated with Aschenbach's thought and Tadzio's form, delicately affirms the compatibility of inspiration and disintegration, knowledge and instinct, in a remarkable, briefly sustained but haunting equilibrium. The "collaboration" of this composer and this writer remains a source of special fascination, and this volume will give opera-goers intrigued by their coming together much valuable food for thought.

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Surveying the reverse slope

Antony Beevor

WILLIAM BOYD
The New Confessions
462pp. Hamish Hamilton. £11.95.
024123836

"My first act on entering this world was to kill my mother", writes the narrator of *The New Confessions*. "The date of my birth is the date of her death, and thus began all my misfortunes." The birth of John James Todd in the Calvinistic city of Edinburgh in 1899 reflects that of the original Jean Jacques in Geneva: "je cotitai la vie à ma mère, et ma naissance fut le premier de mes malheurs." And Todd, like Rousseau, has a brother seven years older.

His upbringing seems to hint at other parallels. The emphasis on flogging at Minto's Academy raises an expectation of our hero acquiring masochistic tastes, like Rousseau at the spanking hand of Mlle Lambercier. Instead, his preference is formed by the sight of the family housekeeper calming her own baby boy on the kitchen table with a deft little act of fellatio (apparently a common practice in many primitive societies).

Also at Minto's Academy, in an incident presumably prompted by Rousseau's contribution to a neighbour's cooking-pot, Todd comes across fellow pupils pissing on Hamish Malahide, a brilliant mathematician who is to become his closest friend. Another similarity is suggested and then sidestepped during Todd's disastrous infatuation for his aunt, a nod in the direction of Madame de Warens. In each case, the failure to mirror the original would appear to indicate that Todd is not a literary clone. The author has another role in store for him.

The span of history tackled in this novel is not the only aspect which might prompt comparison with Anthony Burgess's *Earthly Power*.

Destroying the amenities

E. S. Turner

DEREK ROBINSON
War Story
330pp. Macmillan. £10.95.
033344468X

Derek Robinson has developed a brand of "ripping yarn" all his own. His third novel about flyers at war is a whizz-bang of black comedy: red death, madness, corruption and dedicated destruction of amenities ("the first chandelier came down like a bomb"); all the things, in fact, that give war a bad name. It is hard-bitten stuff, anti-Newbolt and anti-Biggles, yet disrespect falls short of subversion.

Robinson's last book, *Piece of Cake*, was a revisionist account of the Battle of Britain. This time we are with the Royal Flying Corps on the eve of the Somme. Lieutenant Oliver Paxton, aged eighteen, ex-Sherborne, is detailed to lead a flight of five urgently needed fighters from Shoreham to a field near Arras.

Thanks to bad weather and one thing or another his mission takes five days and he loses the other four aircraft. Unabashed, on the last lap he nearly writes off his surviving machine by attempting his first loop. Paxton, besides being a prize fool, is also a prig; and besides being a prig is also a fire-eater. The squadron soon has his measure, but he is slow to get the measure of his colleagues.

Hornet Squadron has strong elements of "Beachcomber's" Narkover. It is run by a young and undisciplined NCOs; the squadron commander, an old man of twenty-four, is going mad and is liable to fly off to Brighton for tea; the adjutant, a prey to all tropical ailments, is pilaging the funds; the pilots slop about playing inebriated cricket. Can the voice of the schoolboy rally the drunks? If cannot, but new brooms are coming, including an adjutant demoted from colonel for shooting too many of his own infantry in an effort to hold the line.

The descriptions of patrolling and aerial combat are superficially well done, German anti-aircraft bursts scatter the sky like huge blue throwing mud at someone's washing, air-

ers, also, but the similarities between the two books remain superficial. Boyd's narrator becomes a film-maker after service in the trenches with a Public Schools Battalion. (As might be expected from Boyd's previous work, the ethos of such a group is rendered grotesque when confronted with a reality as unassimilable as the Third Battle of Ypres.) Todd's most emotional experience, however, comes from reading Rousseau's *Les Confessions* in prison camp. Adapting them for the cinema is to become his life's work and obsession, first in Berlin between the wars and later in Hollywood.

Todd is an excruciating perfectionist. When working on the first part of the *Confessions*, he runs way over budget and finds himself months behind schedule. In the meantime the first talkies finish the era of the silent film virtually overnight. Todd's masterpiece, although brilliant and daringly experimental with triple screens, has arrived just too late. It is a commercial disaster.

Only during the making of this film, reminiscent in many ways of Abel Gance's *Napoleon*, does it become clear that the role the author has been reserving for Todd is that of Rousseau's Boswell. It is a nice touch, yet a sense of confusion lingers. The novel's initial conceit – its title, its opening words, the parallel births and names and elder brothers – has created a distracting expectancy and a compulsion to compare both man and book with their originals.

Todd's subsequent adventures – his volatile affair with Doon Bogun, who plays Madame de Warens in *The Confessions*, the banning of his films by Goebbels after the Nazis come to power, his departure for Hollywood and his blacklisting after the war – veer wildly and unpredictably from pitfall to salvation in an appropriately eighteenth-century manner. This also helps to illustrate a central theme,

highlighted by his old schoolfriend, Malahide, when he explains in 1944 that even mathematics were shown to be unpredictable. "They'll call this the Age of Uncertainty", he says. "The Age of Incompleteness." The experiences of the politically innocent Todd in the First World War, in Nazi Berlin and in McCarthyite Hollywood, are starkly situated on the Age of Enlightenment's reverse slope.

John James, like his namesake, takes pride in his individuality to the point of perversity. On his arrival in 1916 at Nieuport les Bains on the Belgian coast, he immediately sees himself as "the man on the far left" of the whole Western Front, which extends from his North Sea beach to the Swiss border. The notion of being out on a limb holds a strong appeal for him. But throughout his life he is to find himself consistently crossed or betrayed by opportunists cloaked in spurious ideals and his films forgotten by all save a few enthusiasts.

The New Confessions is Boyd's most ambitious and most successful novel. It is an infinitely richer book than his enjoyable, although overrated, *An Ice-Cream War*, and it will more than reassure those who feared, after *Stars and Bars*, that his acclaim as a comic writer might have become a limitation. The Bryllian sense of humour is still present, but in a drier, less manic form. (Todd, a difficult character of quick emotions and a justifiable sense of persecution, almost comes across as

too mellow in the end.)

The key experiences and settings are powerfully evoked: childhood memories, the war in Flanders, the obsession of film-making and the atmosphere in Hollywood during the McCarthyite witch-hunt. The writing is often brilliant in his impressively economic vignettes – it is extremely rare to find sex treated with such unselfconscious humour – and the narrative as a whole possesses a compelling rhythm. The only criticism might be that at times the dialogue is too deft, the prose too controlled.

Of his *Confessions*, Rousseau wrote: "Mon style inégal et naturel, tantôt rapide et tantôt diffus, tantôt sage et tantôt fou, tantôt grave et tantôt gai, fera lui-même partie de mon histoire". The confessional-memoir form of novel aims to balance present view with a revived past. Todd's earlier life is recalled with exquisite spontaneity, but later, the style of his account feels too tight to be entirely convincing, the tone too uniform when compared with those almost musical scales of emotion achieved in the original *Confessions*.

The comparison is probably unfair. It should be irrelevant, but Boyd has raised the ghost, and the ambivalent relationship between the two books still nags. On the other hand, as soon as one turns one's mind back to the satisfaction and enormous pleasure of being swept up in his story, such exceptions seem little more than a churlish quibble.

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Expecting the third age

Frank Kermode on the medieval Calabrian abbot who "some maintain . . . has had as profound an influence on political thought as Marx"

MARJORIE REEVES and WARWICK GOULD
*Joachim of Fiore and the Myth of the Eternal
Evangel in the Nineteenth Century*
365pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £35.
0 1982 6672 3

Joachim da Fiore died in 1202, but his posthumous career has been long and full of interest. A conservative figure, always submissive to Rome, he could hardly have foreseen that by the middle of the thirteenth century his doctrines, interpreted by more fanatical thinkers and swollen by spurious additions, would earn papal condemnation; much less that seven centuries later they would still have the power to excite such prophetic temperaments as those of Yeats and D. H. Lawrence. It was his fate to be cited by many who had little idea of what he wrote, and to be associated with others who, though they professed what appeared to be vaguely Joachimite beliefs, had very likely never heard of Joachim.

Marjorie Reeves has already meditated the fortunes of Joachim in her books *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages* (1969) and *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future* (1976). This new book, written in collaboration with Warwick Gould, a distinguished Yeatsian with a special competence in the nineteenth-century antecedents of that poet's ideas, concerns itself mainly with the modern efflorescence of Joachimism, but it does deal, more briefly, with the six intervening centuries. And the authors are always looking for the true Joachim they naturally have to write quite a bit about various false Joachims as well, and the result is a book of which it is true to say that it is a landmark in the history of ideas. It raises the whole subject to a new level and discovers which of the many enthusiasts and commentators really knew what they were talking about. No doubt there is a good deal to add, and there is still room for argument, but whatever is to be said on this subject will henceforth be said with direct reference to this book.

"Most of the passing references to Joachim do not prove the influence of his ideas." What, in a paragraph, were these ideas? He left three main works, the *Liber Concordie Novi ac Veteris Testamenti*, the *Expositio in Apocalypsim* and the *Psalterium decem chordarum*, all first published in Venice in the early sixteenth century. Joachim believed that there had been an epoch of the Father and an epoch of the Son; the third epoch or *status* would be that of the Holy Spirit. The typological concord between the first two epochs, as illustrated by the Old and New Testaments, would be repeated in the third, which would not abrogate but fulfil the others. He thought that the third epoch would be heralded by a time of troubled transition, but that when it arrived it would be an age of monkish contemplation. Fifty years after his death there began to appear pseudo-Joachimite works which gave these ideas the development they seemed to invite.

The first monastic order to appropriate Joachim – others were to follow – was the Franciscans; and in 1254 Gerard of Borgo, an enthusiastic adherent of the Spiritual party, announced that the Old and New Testaments were now obsolete, having been replaced by a gospel appropriate to the third *status*. This was the Eternal Gospel, or Everlasting Gospel, as prophesied in Revelation 14:6. It is important to note that Joachim, henceforth firmly associated with this new Gospel, had never even thought of such a thing, let alone supposed that the new gospel consisted of his own writings.

Nor had he formulated the notions of an Angelic Pope and a Last World Emperor, which, by the time of the Renaissance, were also firmly attached to his name.

Gerard went too far when he argued that the existing Church would soon be superseded by the *Ecclesia Spiritualis*, to be run by barefoot mendicants. The Eternal Gospel was condemned to be burnt, and Gerard was condemned to perpetual imprisonment. Joachim was obviously implicated in this disgrace, and was accordingly remembered as a heretic, though granted a place in the *Acta Sanctorum*. Later he was assailed also by Protestants, who thought the Eternal Gospel a papist plot against the Bible, though they also supposed Joachim to have identified the Pope with Antichrist, an identification they warmly approved; and they liked his use of the Seven Seals as

published, and the authors note carefully that the idea of three historical epochs could easily be identified with the standard tripartite division *ante legem, sub lege, sub gratia*; even when the triad is expressly linked with the Trinity one needs to be cautious. They are confident that the millenarianism of mid-seventeenth-century England bears no certain trace of the abbot's influence, even though some vulgar apocalypticists talked about the Age of the Spirit. They accordingly dispute the opinion of A. L. Morton that there was a Ranter cult of the Eternal Gospel which was transmitted to Blake; "The Everlasting Gospel", they say, is unrelated to the Joachimite idea. Moreover they dismiss all those attractive arguments about the Joachimite affiliation of the Familists and the Brethren of the Free Spirit. Jakob Boehme must also depart this scene, as a thinker "cosmological rather than historical"; and the Rosicrucians fare no better. The tests for authentic Joachimism here applied are certainly rigorous, and the authors are no respect-

proviso that élites were required to advance it, and occasionally with allusion to the Angelic Pope and the Last World Emperor. The credit for recovering or recirculating the idea of the Eternal Gospel goes to Lessing (*The Education of the Human Race*, 1780), and Schelling knew enough to associate the Third Age with John the Evangelist, as Joachim had done. But a more influential voice was that of Michelet. He believed in an Eternal Gospel that was to be "un Évangile d'intelligence et d'esprit; jusque-là l'Église n'avait que la lettre". He thought of Joachim as a founder of the Renaissance; and a prophet who foretold the transformation of the Church appealed strongly to his religious anticlericalism. Michelet and his followers seized upon the deuterio-Joachim, rather than the original; but it was Michelet's colleague Edgar Quinet who (first, and as it turned out, correctly) associated both Columbus and Savonarola with Joachimite thought.

Renan gave Joachimite studies a sounder scholarly basis; he understood, for example, that there never was such a book as the Eternal Gospel. But, like his predecessors, he saw his material through a haze of contemporary aspirations – he too wanted a new, human Church, such as the world might have had if Rome and Paris had not extinguished the creative power of the thirteenth-century proto-Renaissance. However, the most potent agent of the nineteenth-century diffusion of Joachimism was – and one can well add "as usual" – not a scholar but an unacademic enthusiast, the novelist George Sand.

Sand, who had previously declined an invitation to be the female Messiah of the Saint-Simonians, was associated with Pierre Leroux, who professed the new religion of St John and the Eternal Gospel. Her acquaintance with this enthusiastic but unscholarly sect was in part responsible for her undertaking the novel *Spiridon*, serialized in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in 1838-9, and supplemented by two sequels. The success of this funless ancestor of *The Name of the Rose* is astonishing to contemplate; it made a powerful impression on Mazzini, George Eliot, Matthew Arnold, Dostoevsky and, closer to home, Renan. It tells of Spiridon, a converted Jew, who was first a Catholic, then a Protestant and finally a subscriber to a third religion. After his death his fellow monks discover his secret book, which (in the 1842 revision of the novel) consists of the Fourth Gospel in the hand of Joachim himself, together with an introduction to the Eternal Gospel by John of Parma, the Joachimite General of the Franciscan Order who lost his job when Gerard of Borgo was condemned in 1255. This inflammatory document announced the birth of a new religion, free of sacraments and ceremonies. A third section of the book described a vision in which Christ was comforted by Moses, who had also experienced the supersession of his régime.

If we needed proof that the *frisson* of one epoch can be the ennui of another we could find it by reading a few pages of *Spiridon* and comparing our reactions with those of Renan and Matthew Arnold. Arnold read Renan on Joachim, and even copied out a passage from the heresy trial about the way things were in the *secundus status*: free in respect of the past, not free in respect of the future, so that people lived *inter utrumque, hoc est, inter carnem et spiritum, usque ad praesens tempus*, as it were between two worlds. But from *Spiridon* he copied more than from any other book – thirty-two passages, including "Mon âme est pleine d'espérance en l'avenir éternel." However, the authors acknowledge that despite his admiration for both Sand and Renan, Arnold could not accept Joachim as the herald of a new age

and new hope, or at least not with comparable fervour.

That Joachim had some influence on *Romola* is not news, but its nature is now put beyond doubt. George Eliot's Savonarola is a Joachimite, and the reference in the Proem to the Angelic Pope is not a mere passing allusion. Reeves and Gould know more about the Joachimite prophecies of the Florentine 1490s than George Eliot did, but she had a very good idea of what was in the air, and knew that some of *Romola*'s contemporaries expected a *renovatio*, to be conducted by a *Papa angelico* and a Last World Emperor or Second Charlemagne. The authors conclude that *Romola* has a Joachimite, not a Comtean, structural basis. Yet strict as they are, it strikes me that at this point Reeves and Gould allow themselves some of the freedom of speculation for which they reproach others. When they wish to show that *Romola*'s "Drifting Away" is sound doctrine according to Joachim, they quote "a striking phrase": "Her experience since the moment of her waking in the boat had come to her with as strong an effect as that of the fresh seal on the dissolving wax." This metaphor they confidently derive from Revelation 7:14, where the faithful, after great tribulation, are "sealed", and from the sealing of the faithful in Joachim's *Expositio in Apocalypsim*. Eliot's comparison is itself weak, and the connection with Revelation and Joachim seems at best tenuous. Moreover, the attempt to extend Joachimite patterns to *Middlemarch* seems to me a failure, though I do not say it could not or should not be better done. A similar uncharacteristically wanton flourish occurs when the fondness of Pater and others for the adjective "flowery" is taken to be a covert allusion to "Fiore".

All the same it is probably true that Pater felt the abbot's influence; like others later he probably saw him as the prophet of historical crisis, and himself evolved a very private version of that crisis philosophy. Like many of Pater's other preoccupations, Joachimism became extremely fashionable towards the end of the century; but the advocacy of J. A. Symonds was probably more effective. Developing the ideas of the French historians, he found in the Eternal Gospel the first stirrings of the Renaissance, and in the supposed democratic religion of the Spiritual Franciscans an indication of the happiness to come. Symonds brought off a notable feat of *agglomeramento* by associating Joachim with Whitman, both prophets of a humanist future. And in one way or another many notables of the 1890s professed what was becoming a fashionable allegiance to Joachim. They included Havelock Ellis and Oscar Wilde. However, the greatest names in modern Joachimism are not these, but Huysmans, Yeats and Lawrence.

Dural, in *La-bas* (1891), remarks that the end of a century in which positivism had its peak was just the moment for a revival of mysticism and "les folles de l'occulte". Huysmans knew a lot about these matters, not least the weird neo-Joachimite cult of Pierre-Michel Véltras, which expected the coming of the Paraclete any day, and the institution of an epoch of freedom, goodness and love. Reeves and Gould give their usual careful attention to these *fin-de-siècle* extravaganzas, but the hero of their narrative of modern Joachimism is undoubtedly Yeats, to whom they devote seventy rich pages.

It has long been known that Yeats's story "The Tables of the Law" contained clear references to Joachim; but the extent to which the poet absorbed the ancient system (in forms inevitably somewhat dilute and distorted) has not been fully understood. Yeats's Aherne appears to believe that under the third dispensation everyone will have his or her own Law, which reminds one of the cabalistic conceit that in the end every one of the six hundred thousand will have his or her own Torah and develop individual perfection: "The Tables of the Law", say these authors, "deploys a conception of the Eternal Gospel which may be bizarre, but which is anything but derachonic." They see the poet's vagueness about history as in this case a positive advantage, enabling him to convert what he read in Renan and elsewhere to his own peculiar purposes. These were strictly *fin-de-siècle*, since Yeats produced *Apocalypse* in 1900 (though he later indicated the date to 1927). He blended

Joachim with Blake and Nietzsche, listened to the Joachimite speculations of the erudite Lionel Johnson, and worked it all into a larger occult tradition. He even read Joachim in the Bodleian, and married a wife who possessed Joachimite texts. It is here plausibly argued that the concept of Unity of Being is originally Joachimite. The "multitudinous influx" of which the poet spoke in 1934 is attributed to the abbot's Holy Spirit, and Phase 15 of the System is where the thought of Joachim, now quite assimilated, finds its ultimate place. Although his own speculations grew more and more cyclical, Yeats habitually thought in terms of crisis, and so Joachim was never far from his mind, "a constant part", say the authors, "of his ruling mental set, his 'phantasmagoria'".

The long chapter on Yeats ends with a note on Joyce's interest in Joachim, indicated by an allusion in *Ulysses* but more extensively displayed in *Stephen Hero*. The last of the modern Joachimites to be discussed is D. H. Lawrence, whose interest in the subject has been studied, though perhaps less circumspcctly, by earlier commentators. Lawrence went out of his way to celebrate Joachim in his school history textbook *Movements in European History*, but a trinitarianism with a Joachimite component powerfully affects almost all his work from *Sons and Lovers*, or at any rate from its unpublished preface of 1913, to *The Plumed Serpent*, and even, in some measure, to the posthumous *Apocalypse*. The source of Lawrence's information on the subject remains something of a mystery, though he could have read George Sand and Yeats's story, and Huysmans as well. The young Lawrence was a great reader, and it would be interesting to know whether he had come across Symonds; his interest in Carpenter suggests the possibility of an acquaintance with a vast undergrowth of occultism and of irregular speculation, from which seeds of Joachimism might well have been blown into the imagination of youth.

The provenance of Joachim's ideas in Eastern Europe, to which the authors devote their final chapter, is equally intractable, since there were indigenous triads, such as the three-Romes theory, with which those ideas could be confused; but it seems likely that George Sand contributed something to *The Brothers Karamazov*, and that Soloviev, Kandinsky and others were in one way or another affected by Joachim. The Czechs, it seems, were especially interested, and there is a cantata by Janáček called *The Eternal Gospel*.

The authors, habitually cautious, have avoided saying much about Möller van den Bruck and any possible Joachimite influence on the Nazis – not, it seems, because they think there was none, but because of the improbability of its having any direct connection with genuine Joachimite ideas. This limitation of interest is, of course, consistent with the method they have chosen to use, and it might well have been impossible to finish a study more receptive to ignorant and perverted versions. Yet such versions can as well, or even better, lead to political or religious action. "Joachimism", write Reeves and Gould, "represents only one current in the stream of nineteenth-century thought about history", and this is true; it is also true that those for whom it formed such a current – who saw in it a method of resolving dualisms and a hope for a religion unhampered by the Church – were intellectuals, capable of understanding Joachimism as "a particularly powerful form" of the well-known historiographical habit of thinking in threes, but too obsessed with the idea of an intellectual élite to have much influence on affairs.

Ideas need not have a wholly respectable pedigree to stir the imagination. Renan was enthusiastic about *Spiridon* before he began serious work on Joachim, and Sand's novel, together with other works that came out of the unholy mix of late nineteenth-century anti-establishment thought, seem to have appealed more directly to that vague millennialism and that hazy typological yearning which form part of the uncritical inheritance of the European imagination. However, Marjorie Reeves and Warwick Gould are nothing if not critical, and we may be glad of it, for we now have a map of neo-Joachimism which will prevent error about its major features without inhibiting research in its less formidable byways.

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